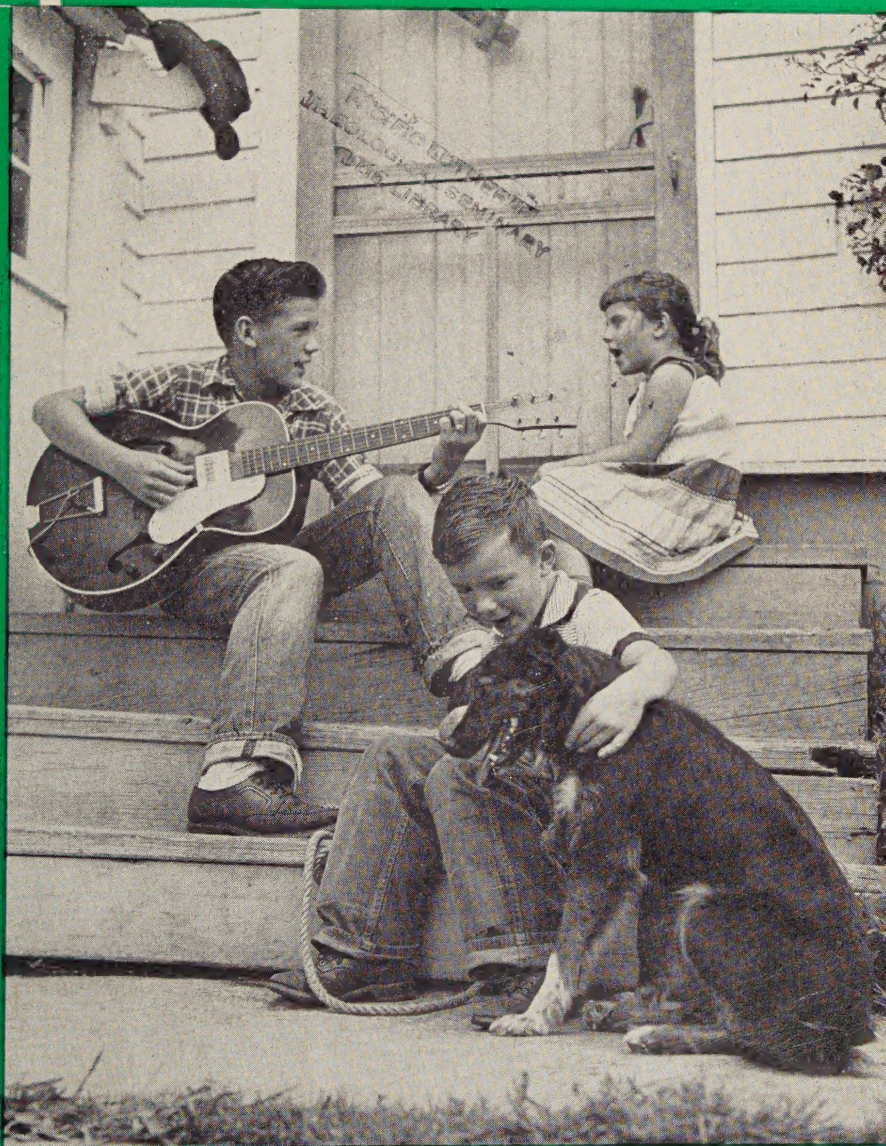


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High Ideals

X

THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA



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High Ideals

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Bible Study (two topics)

based on

The Book of REVELATION

by E. E. Flack

I

Why Study Revelation?

Have you ever read the Book of Revelation? If you have not yet done so, you have missed a very thrilling experience. Every time you read it, you gain new insights into the meaning of the cross.

Revelation is one of the most significant books—not only of the Bible, but of all literature. It is a very unique work! We may even call it a hybrid. Combined in this one treatise, as in no other book, appear apocalyptic, prophecy, drama, hymnody, epistle, and encyclical, or “letters to the seven churches.”

The most misunderstood book in the Bible, Revelation has called forth more objections than any other book. People differ greatly over such topics as the millennium, the end of the world, the final judgment, the resurrection of the dead, the devil, hell, heaven, and the future life—all of which are treated in Revelation. Revivalists and others play upon the imagination of people by preaching exciting sermons about the beasts, the angels, the living creatures, the symbolic numbers, and other strange patterns in the Apocalypse (as it is sometimes called). The study of Revelation throws light upon the cross. It exalts Christ. It brings heaven near. It provides information, instruction, inspiration, and a deeper insight into the meaning of the Gospel of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is important for us to know how to relate Revelation to the Gospel.

A Study Guide on Revelation

The following suggestions are offered for the special study of Revelation:

1. Read the entire Apocalypse in two uneven sections, chapters 1-3 and 4-22. The first three chapters set forth the introduction, the prologue, and the letters to the seven churches. The remainder of the Book presents the drama of redemption, centering in the conquering Christ.

2. Study the background of the

Book. Revelation appeared in a period of persecution in the last days of the Roman Emperor Domitian, about A.D. 95. The author himself had been banished to the Isle of Patmos, a small rocky island off the coast of Asia Minor. Some courageous Christians had suffered martyrdom for their faith in Christ. Others were under the threat of death. Still others were tempted to give up their faith on promise of freedom. Times were terrible. God's help was sorely needed. Would He come to deliver His people? The answer is the theme of the Book: “Behold, I am coming soon!” How do those times compare with ours? Are there people today living under persecution?

3. Consult one or more commentaries on Revelation. Read, for example, the writer's commentary, “The Revelation of John” in the *New Testament Commentary* (edited by Alleman), or his articles which appeared in the “Know your Bible” series on “The Book of Revelation” in *The Lutheran* (August to December, 1950).

4. Study a map of Asia Minor as it appeared in New Testament times, noting particularly the seven cities where the churches addressed were located.

5. Look up the meaning of special terms employed in Revelation. Among the terms appear “Apocalypse”, “Alpha and Omega”, “angel of the church”, “seven golden candlesticks”, “hidden manna”, and “the book of life.”

6. Note the significance of such symbols as numbers, beasts, colors, thunder and lightning, and others. An apocalypse is a special type of literature in which truth is concealed in symbols. Apocalyptic has its own idiom and symbolism, which the reader should seek to understand. The number *seven* for example, appears frequently, as in “the seven churches”, “the seven spirits of God”, “the seven golden candlesticks”, and “the seven stars.”

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7. **Examine various methods of interpretation of Revelation.** One method is called futuristic. It regards the events depicted in the Book as designed to take place in the far distant future, the time of the end. Another method is called the continuous historical. It sees the events as repeated at different times in history. For example, the Antichrist is at one time considered to be the Pope; at another, a Hitler or a Stalin; at another, some other vicious world figure. The most satisfactory method is the so-called contemporary historical, which regards the situation described as that of John's day, but involving truths of abiding significance.

Survey of Chapters 1-3

I. Introduction (1:1-8)

The real title of the Book is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." It is the message which Christ revealed to John to announce to his brethren in their persecution and distress. The witness of John is threefold: to the Word of God, the witness which Jesus bore, and the visions which he saw. A threefold blessing is pronounced: upon the reader, the hearers, and those who give heed to its instruction. All this shows that the Book was intended to be read in the churches. The message is both an apocalypse and a prophecy: an apocalypse, in that it is a disclosure of hidden truth; a prophecy, in that it sets forth things soon to come to pass (v. 3).

John greets the seven churches of Asia Minor, which are representative of the whole Church, in the name of the Triune God (v. 4). He characterizes Christ as "the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." And he salutes "Him who loves us, and has freed us from our sins by his blood." Revelation makes much of the cross. The "Alpha and the Omega" are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, pointing to the completeness and supremacy of God in Christ.

II. The Prologue (1:9-20)

In this section, John calls attention to his own suffering for his faith in exile

on the Isle of Patmos—"for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus," (v. 9)—and indicates the circumstances under which he received his vision. He was "in the Spirit," in a deep ecstatic or spiritual experience, "on the Lord's day," here mentioned for the first time in Scripture (v. 10). In his vision he was directed to send a message to the seven churches in the order of travel (v. 11).

As he turned to view the scene, he caught a glorious glimpse of the Christ, whom he describes in apocalyptic patterns as "one like a son of man," etc., in imagery taken largely from Ezekiel and Daniel, though not by direct quotations. The Book of Daniel is the model for all later apocalypses. The descriptions point to the authority, dignity, majesty, power, and might of Christ, the risen and victorious Lord, who stands in the midst of the churches (v. 20).

III. The Letters to the Seven Churches (2:1-3:22)

These seven messages are not to be regarded as separate letters sent to the churches named but as combined parts of the whole epistle intended for all churches. They all follow the same general pattern. That formula includes in brief (1) an address to "the angel of the church"; (2) a characterization of the Christ, such as appears in the Prologue (1:9-20); (3) a word of commendation; (4) a pronouncement of condemnation; (5) an appeal to penitence; (6) a promised blessing; and (7) a reference to the Spirit speaking to the churches.

The "angel of the church" is often interpreted as the messenger who bore the letter, the pastor, bishop, or overseer, but it is preferable to regard the reference as to the heavenly counterpart or guardian spirit, though the message is to the church itself. In apocalyptic, the action takes place in the celestial realm.

1. *The Message to Ephesus* (2:1-7)
This was a foremost city of the province of Asia Minor. It was a center of emperor worship. The congregation established by Paul and his companions was strong. The Ephesian Christians are commended for their (1) diligence; (2) endurance of

ardships; (3) devotion to the truth; (4) exposure of imposters; (5) hatred of wickedness. Do you know of Christians in our day who display such courage and fortitude in the face of persecution? On the other hand, the church in Ephesus had lost its first love, as have many congregations in our time. Hence the appeal for repentance and revival of active faith. The promised blessing for the faithful is the privilege of partaking of "the tree of life." "To him who conquers" refers to the victor in the struggle, the faithful martyr, the persevering soul, the heir of the promise.

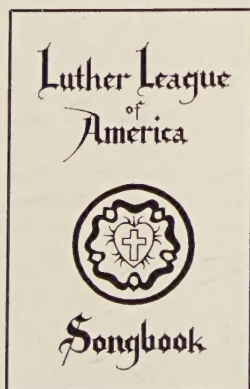
2. *The Message to Smyrna* (2:8-11). Situated about forty miles north of Ephesus, this city claimed first place among the cities of the province. It was a wealthy commercial city, with extensive trade, and a center also of emperor worship. Quite appropriately, Christ addresses it as "the first and the last . . ." The church here requires no censure. Enduring persecution at the hands of both Jews and pagans, the Christians in Smyrna maintained courage under trial and distress, imprisonment and even martyrdom. At a later time Polycarp, the very bishop of Smyrna, was burned at the stake at the age of eighty-six. Asked to deny Christ, he said, "All these years Christ has kept me. Shall I deny him

now? Never!" So he went to a martyr's death. Would we have such faith and courage today? The promise to the faithful is "the crown of life."

3. *The Message to Pergamum* (2:12-17). This city was located about fifty miles northeast of Smyrna. It was famous for its cults, its school of medicine, and its temple erected to Caesar Augustus. It is called "the seat of Satan." Wickedness flourished there, as in so many modern cities. One of the martyr citizens was named Antipas (v. 13). The church is commended for its courage and confession, but it is condemned for the compromising ways of some of its members, who tolerated wicked practices, such as obtained in ancient Israel in the days of Balaam. Repentance is demanded on pain of judgment. Do you know of church members today who compromise their faith by engaging in worldly ways? He who perseveres in the faith is assured of the privilege of eating "the hidden manna," and of receiving an inscribed stone typifying acquittal or reward.

4. *The Message to Thyatira* (2:18-29). This city of Lydia, lying about forty miles from Pergamum, was famous for its industries, especially the manufacturing of woolen goods. Lydia, a seller of purple from Thyatira, was the first reported European convert. Doubtless she

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helped Paul organize the church at Philippi. The evil influences of trade guilds and pagan practices call forth the longest of the seven letters. Christ commends the Christians at Thyatira for their charity, service, faith, and endurance, but condemns them for harboring a Jezebel of a woman who engaged in wicked works. The victor in the struggle is promised authority to rule over the nations.

5. *The Message to Sardis* (3:1-6). Thirty miles south of Thyatira lay this city, famous as a trade center. Long a capital of rich Lydia, Sardis was a wealthy city. Its inhabitants lived in luxury. This was not good for the growth of the spiritual life. As the city was caught off guard and captured on two different occasions, so the Christians are warned to watch their situation, remember their early zeal, and to guard their sacred trust. Those who keep themselves free from pagan practices are promised eternal life in terms of wearing white array and having their names recorded in the book of life.

6. *The Message to Philadelphia* (3:7-13). At the gateway to fertile vineyards lay this city, twenty-eight miles southeast of Sardis. The Christians in this place are commended rather than censured. They were suffering hardships, particularly at the hands of Jews. But Christ, who has the key of David, opens before them a door assuring them of the privilege of higher service in His Kingdom as well as opportunity for mission work. As the city received a new name, Neo-Caesarea, so the victor in the strife will receive the new name which Christ bestows.

7. *The Message to Laodicea* (3:14-22). From the hot springs of Hierapolis flowed a stream which became lukewarm and nauseating by the time it reached Laodicea, a few miles distant. This situation affords the pattern for the condemnation of lukewarm Christians. And how many Christians there are who are lukewarm today! Laodicea was famous for its riches and its noted medical school. But Christ offers greater riches and better

ointment for the eyes of faith. Present at the door, He promises the person who responds intimate fellowship and the privilege of reigning with Him in His Kingdom.

Memory Verses

1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

2:7 "To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

2:10 "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life."

3:8 "Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut."

3:11 "I am coming soon; hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown."

3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

Questions for Discussion

What are some of the names and titles of Christ in Revelation? How do churches lose their first love? Why is God's Word called "a sharp two-edged sword"? What are some of the open doors before us today? What famous painting and what well-known hymns were inspired by the text, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"? Do we think much about angels today? If not, why not? Which makes the greater impression, words or symbols? Which of the seven churches is our church most like? What would you commend and what condemn in the church today?

Worship

Call to worship: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

Hymn: "O Jesus, Thou Art Standing," 322 CSB

Scripture reading: Revelation 1:9-20

Prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Who Art the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, Who art to come and reveal to us Thy truth, open our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, and enable us to love Thee with our whole hearts, for Thy name's sake. Amen."

Offering

Topic

Hymn: 69 CSB

Lord's Prayer.

II

The Book of Revelation is divided heavenly into two parts. The first part, chapters 1-3, sets forth the introduction, prologue, and the letters to the seven churches. The second part, chapters 4-22, presents the drama of redemption as it unfolds in three successive series of divine judgments upon the wicked world leading up to the scenes of the ultimate victory of Christ and the coming of His kingdom. It is to this second part that we now give attention.

Purpose of This Study

In approaching the study of chapters 22 we have in mind several aims:

- To seek to understand the meaning of apocalyptic in relation to prophecy.
- To find a satisfactory method of interpreting Scripture.
- To acquire a knowledge of the meaning of apocalyptic symbolism.
- To seek to discover the bearing of Revelation on our life today.

Prophecy and Apocalyptic

Prophecy and apocalyptic are two types of expression in Scripture. The former appears largely in the Old Testament in such books as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, the latter, in such late books as Ezekiel, Daniel, intertestamental books, Enoch, Baruch, certain teachings of our Lord in the Gospels (Matthew 25, Mark 13, Luke 21), and the Book of Revelation. Modern study of the Bible has brought fresh understanding of the significance of apocalyptic. In comparing these two we note certain resemblances and numerous differences:

A. Resemblances. Prophecy and apocalyptic are similar in the following respects:

1. Both claim divine inspiration and follow in a succession of agencies of revelation, namely seers, prophets, scribes, and apocalypticists. God was a seer; Isaiah, a prophet; Ezra, scribe; and John, an apocalypticist.

2. Both employ the same channels of expression to make known God's will, namely visions, symbols, allegories, and other literary devices.

3. Both present a profound hope, the hope of the coming of a Messiah or Deliverer of His people.

4. Both are concerned with the same objects—the overthrow of evil and the realization of the kingdom of God.

5. Both are ethical, that is, they contend against moral evils in society, such as drunkenness, debauchery, lewdness, impurity, infidelity, and other forms of wickedness.

6. Both are dependent and complementary. Prophecy depends on apocalyptic to complete its unfulfilled announcements; apocalyptic, on prophecy to provide its patterns of revelation. The two complement each other and converge in New Testament thought. The Book of Revelation is called both a "prophecy" (1:3) and an "apocalypse" (1:1).

B. Differences. Prophecy and apocalyptic differ in the following:

1. The prophet is a preacher, while the apocalypticist is a writer behind the scenes. Many apocalypticists conceal their identity behind the names of ancient heroes of the faith, such as Adam, Moses, Enoch, etc.

2. Prophecy deals with the present situation in a limited way (Amos struck at the social injustices of his day); apocalyptic, on the other hand, despairing of the present, deals largely with the past and the future.

3. Prophecy is a philosophy of history; apocalyptic, a philosophy of religion. The one finds meaning in the events of Hebrew history, while the other turns to the celestial realm of angelic figures and hidden truths.

4. Prophecy has a practical interest touching current wars, social situations, present-day conflicts of men and nations; apocalyptic presents an outline of the divine plan of the universe from creation to the end of time.

5. Prophecy uses symbols sparingly; apocalyptic, profusely. In the latter appear all sorts of figures, such as symbolic colors, numbers, beasts, angelic forms, and storms.

6. Prophecy is patient and optimistic; apocalyptic, pessimistic. The one sets forth the hope of a better world; the other sees the world growing worse, so that the only hope lies in God's sudden intervention.

7. Prophecy is largely national, concerned with Israel's destiny; apocalyptic, despairing of all national hopes, looks to the New Jerusalem from above.

8. Prophecy is conditional, its goal being subject to change as God makes changes or al-

terations in His plans; apocalyptic, predetermined, absolute, settled once for all, conclusive, certain. Prophecy has no clear presentation of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Survey of Revelation 4-22

I. The Vision of God and of the Lamb (4:1-5:14)

In these two chapters, the seer or apocalyptist presents in panoramic view the drama of redemption in a succession of enactments designed to comfort Christians under persecution. First of all, he is enabled through his deep spiritual experience to look through the door in the vault of heaven and view God on His throne set for judgment. The vision is too marvelous to describe except in veiled mysteries.

God sits on His throne in all His glory and majesty, with the brilliance of sparkling gems and encircling rainbow. About the throne appear twenty-four thrones, on which as many elders sit. This is the court of heaven. Thunder and lightnings announce the coming of judgment.

Four living creatures on the sides of the throne reveal distinctive features. The one appearing like a lion symbolizes the fierceness of God's wrath; the ox, His almighty power; the man, the knowledge or omniscience of God; and the flying eagle, the swiftness of the execution of His judgments. These living creatures sing their Trisagion, "Holy, Holy, Holy . . ." And the elders worship in praise of the Creator.

In connection with this vision of the enthroned Majesty, appears in chapter 5, the scene of the Lamb, Who alone is able to release the seals of the book of destiny which God holds in His right hand. When it is discovered that the Lamb is Victor, a great chorus of praise ascends in worship of Him. "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. . . ." is a glorious paean of praise of the Redeemer. Revelation has been the source of and inspiration for many of the greatest hymns, oratorios, cantatas, and hallelujah choruses of the Church. Can you name some of them?

II. First Series of Judgments: The Seven Seals (6:1-8:2)

Chapters 4 and 5 are followed by the first of a three-fold series of dramatic enactments, seals, trumpets, and bowls. When the Lamb opens the seven seals of the book of destiny, striking scenes appear. With the opening of the first four seals the four horsemen of the Apocalypse appear. They represent four sore judgments—war, civil strife, famine, and pestilence, as distinguished by the color of the horses. The fifth scene is that of the martyrs crying to God for vengeance upon this evil age. The sixth reveals convulsions in the universe affecting all classes and conditions of men.

The great question is: "Who can stand?" Then, following the opening of the sixth seal, appear two interludes or breaks in the drama, depicting scenes of the encouragement and comfort of the faithful. How comforting are the words: "God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." With such assurance men are able to face even martyrdom. The opening of the seventh seal does not conclude the judgments, but introduces a new cycle of events of even greater import, set forth by God's ministering angels.

III. Second Series of Judgments: The Trumpets (8:3-11:19)

In this section appears the second series of divine visitations in the seven trumpet blasts made by the seven angels. The sounding of the first four trumpets introduces judgments affecting the physical universe—the earth, sea, rivers, and heavenly bodies, catastrophes like the plagues of Egypt of old, with worse woes to come. Then, with the fifth trumpet blast, smoke appears from the bottomless pit, turning out to be a cloud of demonic locusts, which torture men unmercifully though they do not affect those sealed of God. The sixth trumpet blast releases a plague of hellish horsemen, who, in war array, produce a wholesale slaughter; yet they leave the pagan world indulgent in wickedness and impenitent.

As in the case of the seals, two inter-

es or breaks appear between the sixth and seventh trumpet blasts (chs. 10 and 11).

When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, voices in heaven resound with triumphant cry, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ . . ." (11:15). Heaven resounds with the note of victory, the victory of Christ.

Conflict between God and the Dragon (12:1-14:20)

According to this section, there was war in heaven, but the Devil is cast down so our victory is assured already. Coming down to earth, the old Serpent persecuted the Church, the mother of people of God, and sought to destroy the Messiah, the seed of the woman, at birth. Failing in all this, he pours out his fury upon her other progeny, but in vain.

The beast rising out of the sea is a reflection of pagan Rome, whose emperorship threatened to destroy the Church. The priest of this cult in the province of Asia Minor was particularly aggressive in imposing the practice on Christians at the threat of martyrdom. The beast has his mark which he imposes on all subjects, but his number, 666, is an imperfect seal.

The scene of the Lamb on Mount Zion with His glorious company sealed of God (ch. 14) is reassuring. The situation is tense. The conflict is serious. But, according to angelic announcement, Rome, the embodiment of the demonic, is doomed and the martyrs are victors.

Third Series of Judgments: The Bowls (15:1-16:21)

In the pouring out of the content of the bowls, judgment is liquefied as red-hot molten iron. Prior to the releasing of the judgments, in anticipation of vic-

tory, a celestial scene appears of redeemed martyrs, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, thus connecting the first great victory of God's people with the final.

The judgments experienced in the pouring out of the contents of the bowls of wrath are more severe than those of the preceding series. The first four of the seven plagues afflict the whole of the pagan world with great severity like the plagues of Egypt, including foul sores, waters turned into blood, and the sun intensified with scorching heat. The fifth plague struck at the throne of the beast, turning his kingdom into darkness; the sixth dried up the Euphrates in preparation for the kings of the East to come in conquest of Rome; and the seventh concluded the series in a great and fearful earthquake, with colossal upheavals, thunder, lightning, and the falling of hailstones of great magnitude. Still men remain impenitent.

VI. The Final Conflict: The Victory of Christ (17:1-20:15)

The great harlot, or scarlet woman, embodied in pagan Rome, is brought to judgment. She is called "Babylon" because, like that ancient city, she seduced the nations by her idolatrous and adulterous practices, her luxury and debauchery, her intoxication with the blood of the martyrs, and her rulership of the nations. Her wicked ruler Nero, as the Antichrist, with his cohorts challenges the Lamb in a great and final conflict.

The destruction of Babylon or Rome is announced and a dirge is delivered over her downfall by kings, merchants, and mariners, who profited through her traffic. The final chant of doom shows the city left completely desolate. Heaven rejoices over her devastation.

Then Christ appears, riding a white horse, in symbol of victory, and with him the armies of heaven. As King of kings

A religion that does nothing, gives nothing,
costs nothing, suffers nothing, is worth nothing.

and Lord of lords, He goes forth in battle array, conquers the Antichrist and his companies, and consigns them to the lake of fire and brimstone. The Devil is bound a thousand years, a symbol of completeness from which the idea of a millennium is derived. He is released for a time, but finally is cast down forever into the lake of fire, with all those whose names are not recorded in the Lamb's book of life.

VII. Vision of the New Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)

Following disposition of the wicked, attention is turned to the righteous who are to enjoy the bliss of the New Jerusalem, depicted as the Bride of the Lamb adorned for her husband. The description staggers the imagination. The City four-square shines in gem-like glory, with streets of gold, gates of pearl, and walls of precious stones, and with God the Almighty and the Lamb its temple and light.

Old Jerusalem had no suitable supply of water, but the New Jerusalem, in contrast, has a stream that "makes glad the city of God." On its banks appears the tree of life with all manner of fruits and with medicinal leaves for the healing of the nations. His own worship the Lamb in glory and victory. What a comfort for Christians, and especially for those facing persecution and martyrdom!

VIII. The Epilogue (22:6-21)

The Book closes with a reassurance that Christ is coming soon, that the message of John is complete and genuine, and that no change dare be made in the text on penalty of plague. This is the copyright of Christ: the truth may not be altered. He comes as "the Alpha and the Omega . . ." The conclusion is the early church prayer of expectancy, "Amen, Come Lord Jesus!"

Memory Verses

4:8 "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

4:11 "Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created."

5:12 "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

5:13 "To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

11:15 "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!"

19:6-7 "Hallelujah! For the Lord Our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready."

21:6a "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."

22:20 "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

Questions for Discussion

What symbols appear in the architecture of your church and what do they stand for? What symbols would you use to dramatize such ideas as defeat, victory, evangelism, zeal, temptation, endurance, atonement, love, and hope? How does Revelation offer comfort and encouragement in the face of atomic weapons? In what ways does persecution in many parts of the world today resemble that described in Revelation? Are you as a Christian prepared to accept martyrdom, if need be, for your faith? Does the confirmation vow to be faithful unto death imply willingness to accept martyrdom? What assurance do we have that we shall be victorious through faith?

Worship

Call to Worship: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

Hymn: "Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power" 295 CSB

Scripture Reading: Revelation 7:9-17

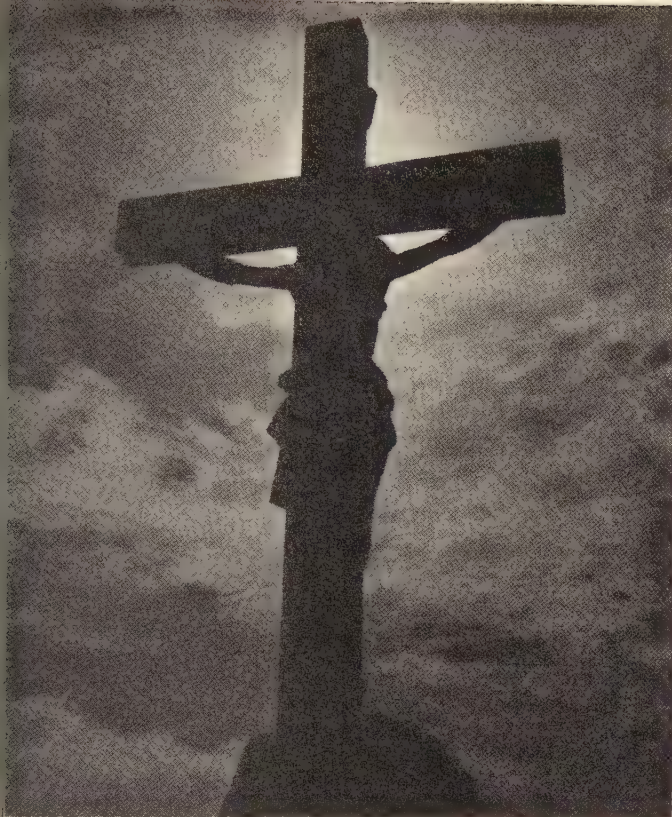
Prayer: "O Thou Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, we look to Thee and to Thy Cross in penitence and faith, confessing our sins and shortcomings and seeking the forgiveness which Thou alone canst give. Make us ever mindful of the redemption which Thou hast wrought for us and give us victory in all our temptations and doubts, that we may always live in Thee and in the service of Thy Church, for Thy name's sake. Amen."

Offering

Topic

Hymn: "Christian, Dost Thou See Them," 79 CSB

Lord's Prayer.



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U**

A JUDAS?

Do you betray Christ?

by carl w. folkemer

PURPOSE OF THIS TOPIC

The primary purpose of this topic is to give leaguers (through background material in the Bible) a better understanding of Judas Iscariot, his sin of betrayal, and the ways in which we may profit from his life to be better servants of Jesus Christ. It is also a purpose of this topic to show how great the love of Jesus is for us, especially when we see that love in contrast to the betrayal,

What About Judas?

What do we know about Judas Iscariot? What was his family background? What was his particular job as a disciple? Why is he so well known by the Christian Church?

All the world knows the name *Judas Iscariot*. There are more people probably who know about Judas than there are who know about the great apostles Peter, John, and Paul. Yet, with the exception of a few Biblical references, very little is actually known of this man who is branded forever, "The man who betrayed his Master".

Let us dig into the findings of some of the New Testament scholars and put down in black and white what we know of Judas.

Bible References to Judas— Read These First

In Mark 3:16ff, Matthew 10:2ff and Luke 6:13ff Judas is listed as one of the Apostles. Note that his name is at the end of each list. He is referred to as the one who betrayed Jesus.

In the following passages of the New Testament references are made to Judas particularly. None of these references is very complimentary: John 6:64ff, John 12:4ff, John 17:12, Luke 22:3. Compare this last reference to Mark 14:4f and Matthew 26:8f.

The story of his betrayal is recorded in Mark 14:10f, Matthew 26:14ff, Luke 22:4ff, John 13:2ff, Mark 14:18ff, Matthew 26:21ff, Luke 22:21ff, John 13:21ff, Mark 14:43ff, Matthew 26:47ff, Luke 22:47f and John 18:2ff.

The death of Judas is recorded in only two passages in the New Testament, Matthew 27:3ff and Acts 1:16ff.

You will notice that, with the exception of Luke 22:3, the first three Gospel writers say nothing about Judas before the betrayal.

His Name—Judas Iscariot

The name *Judas* is found in all the lists of the apostles. This name could be the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Judah" which means "one who is the

subject of praise." Look up Genesis 29:34 and 49:8 and you will see that the name Judah refers to one who is praised. Is this is where the name Judas comes from and that is quite possible, isn't it a sad thing that a man whose name indicated he should be praised is really the object of the world's greatest shame?

The name *Iscariot* is not clear. Bible scholars have given various explanations of what it means. Most scholars now believe that it comes from the Hebrew word "Ish-Kerioth" (pronounce Ish-car-ee-oath) which means "a man of Kerioth". Probably Kerioth was a town in South Judah. If this is true, Judas was the only one of the twelve disciples who was not from Galilee.

Other Names for Judas

Judas was called "a thief" in John 12:6. This is the story of Jesus at the home of Mary and Martha. When Mary washes the feet of Jesus with the precious ointment worth about 60 dollars, Judas suggests that it would have been better to sell the ointment and give the money to poor people. But the writer John says he really wanted to steal the money.

Judas was also called the "betrayer" or "traitor". These terms are given in the three lists of the disciples. In John 6:60 it says that Jesus knew from the very beginning who it was that would betray Him. This means that Jesus knew the thoughts of Judas and the evil feelings of his heart.

Another name in Scripture for Judas is "a devil." This is found in John 6:70. Jesus saw in Judas one who had evil purposes. This does not mean that he could not be saved. All of us have evil purposes. Yet Jesus loves all of us, wants us very much, and can save us if we turn to Him.

In John 17:12 Judas is referred to as "the son of perdition." That means he was in the state of being lost from Christ forever.

Judas Before He Betrayed Jesus

What was Judas like before he betrayed Jesus? If he was evil through an

rough, why did Jesus choose him as a disciple in the first place? Was there any God in him?

We know that he was chosen by Jesus as one of the original twelve disciples. That would indicate that Jesus saw some God in him. It even indicates that Jesus thought he could be a leader in the Church. Then the Gospel writers Luke and John mention that at a point in his life Satan entered the heart of Judas. That would indicate that Judas had the possibility of being a great servant of Jesus. But, like so many people today, he listened to the temptations and voice of the devil rather than to Jesus. Very soon the devil had complete possession of him. When Jesus was at the home of Mary and Martha, the devilish character of Judas could be seen clearly, as shown in John 12:4f. Mary desired to use a whole bottle of precious ointment to wash the feet of Jesus, not only to soothe his tired feet but also to show her love for Him. Judas was angry at what he termed a pure waste. Why, this costly perfume could have sold and the money given to the poor! Actually, as it says in the passage, he slipped into pocket the money himself. His heart was evil already, possessed by the devil. We do not know the exact time at which these evil desires began in him. We do not even know for sure when he planned to betray Jesus. Some Bible scholars say that he may have made all the plans before the Lord's Supper in the Upper Room; others say that it was after the Supper that he made his final plans.

Judas and the Betrayal

All the Gospel writers say that Jesus knew that He would be betrayed. Furthermore, He announced that His betrayer was present at the Supper. The disciples were amazed at this announcement. They began to question each other and themselves. We can only wonder what was in the mind of Judas at that time. We don't even know whether he ate the Supper with the disciples. We do know that we should never partake of the Lord's Supper with such an evil purpose in our mind and heart.

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Judas left the group of disciples and went to the Jewish authorities of the Temple who had been plotting to take the life of Jesus. There he bargained with them for 30 pieces of silver. It was arranged that Judas should kiss Jesus. This would be the sign for the authorities to seize Christ. Later in the Garden, Judas did just that, only to hear Jesus say to him, "Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" The evil deed had been done. It was only a matter of time before Jesus would be tried and sentenced to be hanged on a cross.

Judas After He Betrayed Jesus

Only in the Gospel of Matthew is there mention of Judas after the betrayal. Matthew in chapter 27:3ff tells the story of Judas and his tragic death.

Filled with shame for what he has done, Judas returned the money he had received to the authorities. They would not accept it because it was "tainted" money and thus could not be used in the Temple. Whereupon Judas threw the money into the Temple, went out and hanged himself. The priests of the Temple took the money, bought a field called "Potter's Field," and used it as a cemetery for burying those who were not true Jews.

In Acts 1:18,19 there is a slightly different story of the death of Judas. It says that Judas used the money to buy the field and died a horrible death. The two stories of Matthew and Acts may be related to each other. Judas may have tried to hang himself only to have the rope break, as some suggest, and fell to his death. The field was called "the field of blood." At any rate, it was a horrible ending to a sinful life.

What Was Judas Like?

Let us suggest the following thoughts about the character of Judas:

(1) *He was a man who had the pos-*

sibility of being a good disciple, but he followed the advice of the devil rather than the way of Jesus.

(2) He was a covetous man, thereby breaking the 9th and 10th commandments. He desired that which he should not have. Other disciples committed this same sin as do all of us. The covetousness of Judas, however, led him to betray Jesus.

(3) He was more ambitious for power and for Jesus to establish an earthly Kingdom than he was to do the will of Jesus in ministering to the needs of others.

(4) Judas was a jealous man. When Jesus said "You—the twelve, did not I choose, and of you one is a devil," Judas was there and felt that the other disciples were preferred by Jesus before him.

(5) The sin of Judas was especially great because he was one of the disciples. He betrayed a friend. Jesus showed mercy, affection, and trust toward him. In spite of that, Judas betrayed his Lord and Saviour.

Everyone a Judas

The sin of Judas can never be committed again in the same form because we cannot nail Jesus to a cross. But the same kind of sin may, and is, repeated time after time. In Hebrews 6:6, the writer says that all men may crucify Jesus in their own way. We all run the danger of betraying Jesus. How do we betray Him?

(1) By placing ourselves and our own wills before that of Jesus.

(2) By continually longing for earthly things to the neglect of serving our Lord.

(3) By giving place to jealousy and forgetting God's love for us.

(4) By calling ourselves Christians and deliberately shaming the name by the way we talk, think and act.

(5) By accepting all the love and goodness of God and returning nothing to Him.

(6) By listening to and following the advice of those who are evil rather than by standing fast to that which Christ places before us.

Everyone must answer for himself the extent to which he is a Judas. Around the table at the Lord's Supper Jesus announced that one of the disciples would betray Him. Immediately, the disciple (and we wonder if Judas did also) began to ask the Master, "Is it I? Is it I?" Let us all ask ourselves honestly—"Am I Judas?"

Suggestions for Presentation

a. Before beginning the topic, ask the Leaguers to tell you everything they know about Judas without looking up any Bible references.

b. Give each person one of the 23 Bible references to Judas. Ask them to read it carefully and make note of the important things said of Judas. If possible, list their responses on a blackboard.

c. Give paper and pencil to each leaguer after you have presented the Bible references and the story of Judas as given in the topic material. Ask them to list all of the spiritual and moral weaknesses in the character of Judas. You might desire to list these on a blackboard as the result of an open discussion.

d. Discuss ways in which we today act like Judas and ways in which we can overcome these weaknesses.

These four suggestions will be the difference between a drab and uninteresting presentation and one that is both stimulating, educational, and beneficial. The leader should make use of these suggestions listed here or something similar to them.

Daily Bible Readings—week preceding the topic

Sunday, Matthew 18:10-14; Monday, Matthew 16:21-23; Tuesday, Luke 22:24-30; Wednesday, John 10:7-18; Thursday, John 12:44-50; Friday, John 18:1-11; Saturday, Luke 4:1-13.

Suggestions to the Leader

1. Read the whole program through thoroughly.

2. Personally study all the Bible references to Judas mentioned in the Topic.

3. Have your material well in hand before you stand up. *Don't* read the material as it is printed. Put it in your own words.

4. Be sure to use suggestions for making the program successful.

5. Have Bibles, blackboard, paper and pencils distributed before the program begins.

6. Come to league early enough to have everything ready.

Christ Lives in Me

by Helen Evans

Easter is the day of the empty tomb. Have you ever tried to think yourself right into the events of that day? Let's do it. You are there!

You are a citizen of Jerusalem. Now and then during the last three years you heard the man, Jesus of Nazareth, teach in the city. You know the families of some of His closest followers.

You were horrified at the extremes to which His enemies went—putting him to death.

You have shared with your friends their grief since His crucifixion, day before yesterday.

Are you there? In quiet meditation (Leader, give them time) try to capture within yourself something of the situation. Forget about new clothes and Easter grades and egg-hunts, and family gath-

erings. "Tear off all the wrappings and get to the real thing—Christ is risen! The tomb is empty! Mary Magdalene has seen and talked with Him. Peter and John have seen the empty tomb (sealed and guarded by Rome, though it was!) and what they saw has convinced them that their Lord lives! The seal of the tomb has been broken, the stone rolled away by an angel of Heaven; the stalwart Roman guards have trembled with fear. **No sealed door has confined Him!** "He has risen," announces the angel. Later that day, a door locked by the disciples for fear of their enemies is no barrier. The risen Christ appears in their midst! **No sealed door has kept Him out!** What a day it is! In the history of mankind this has not happened before.

The statement of fact which is our topic heading—Christ lives in me—should cause as much awe and wonder today as the events of Resurrection Day caused then. Questions should come

flooding to the mind upon speaking or hearing these words. How is this possible—"Christ lives in me"? What does this mean in my life? I've heard this before, but how can I be sure "Christ lives in me"?

HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? It is possible for Christ to live in you and in me because, according to His promise, He did arise from the grave and is alive forever, a fact witnessed by His followers and disciples in Holy Scripture, and witnessed as well by the life of His servants and the history of His Church through the centuries since His resurrection.

Christ lives today! Every Sunday ought to be Easter for the Christian, because each Sunday is an observance of the first day of the week when Christ arose. Sunday would be like any other day, had the tomb held our Lord. The story of His life would be another interesting biography of another good man (providing anyone had bothered to write it down) if He had not risen from the grave. No wonder Easter is a day for Christian rejoicing!



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN MY LIFE? Because Christ lives, I can show Him my love and gratitude for His loving sacrifice and suffering of death in my behalf. In rejoicing in his resurrection and its meaning in our lives, we dare not separate our joy from the meaning of His suffering and death.

The story is told of a fine old Negro aunt, who was whipping her nephew whom she had raised, who, incidentally, was really past the age of spankings. He saw her crying as she did it, and when he asked her why, she poured out her concern for him and how she had tried so hard, ending with "... and still you try my soul. But it's not my soul I'm thinking of, Son; it's yours. I want you to carry yourself right, to 'sociate with decent people, and be a good boy.' "That," reported the nephew, "was my last whipping. But it wasn't the whipping that taught me what I needed to know. It was because she cared and cried. When people care and cry for your soul, they can straighten out your soul."

The death of Jesus was not for God's sake, but for ours. Therefore, our joy in the resurrection—the joy of Easter—springs from a sense of unworthiness and deep gratitude for what God has done in our behalf. Our love and gratitude may best be shown through our obedience to Christ and His teachings, and in loving service to Him and others.

Second, because Christ lives in me, I cannot ignore Him and His teachings. I must make a decision either to obey or disobey, knowing that if I turn from Him, my life will be empty and bent toward evil. Jesus said, "He who is not for me is against me." I must make a decision. I cannot be neutral about Jesus Christ.

Third, because "Christ lives in me," I need not be afraid of persons, or of life, or of God; for Christ dwelling in me gives me courage, wisdom, and guidance. Through Him I may stand in the presence of God, cleansed and forgiven.

Because Christ lives in me, my life must reflect Him by being, or at least becoming, more and more Christ-like. I must permit Him to use my life as it is.

st suited to be used. I must be careful everything.

The other day a teenager (a district Luther League president, I'm pleased to say!) told of a walkout in his school when about 40 Negroes were admitted. In this school of over 1500, all but about 100 walked out. In this personal conversation, the young man very humbly showed that he could not be mindful of Christ and His teachings and walk out *so he stayed!* This is only one result of remembering daily, "Christ lives in me."

HOW CAN I BE SURE "CHRIST LIVES IN ME"? This question probably comes to every Christian's mind at some point in his life. Let's look at it from a purely practical standpoint. Why did you learn to swim? Why did you take up your favorite hobby? Probably only because you wanted to. Do you *want* Christ to live in you? Then He does. One day, then, by which we may know "for sure" is to ask ourselves whether we *want* Him, and then answer honestly. Did you learn immediately and all at once about swimming, or your hobby? Neither does one become all at once a mature Christian. But if you want Him to, you can be sure that Christ will help you all the days of your life, and as time goes on you will see His hand more and more clearly as you respond to His in-dwelling. A TV artist who claimed to be an atheist became a Christian and has done considerable writing to help young people in their Christian living. In her book, *Never a Dull Moment*, this author, Eudenia Price, writes, "If you have changed places with God and have finally allowed Him to take over the living of your life . . . then . . . your disposition will be better . . . You won't be so critical . . . You won't deliberately hurt people . . . You won't snub anyone . . . You'll begin to lose your selfish habits." This is the second way we may know if Christ lives in us: *We begin to change inwardly in our thoughts and outwardly in our actions toward others.* When one is conscious of the presence of Christ within one, one just *has* to be different.

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A young man who had been at the foot of his classes suddenly decided to follow Christ and His Way. Then he felt that the foot of the class was no place for a Christian. He began to work hard and long at his lessons. Soon the foot of the class was left to others. He too had found a new life that took him in later years to a place of international leadership in Christian work. When Christ lives in us, there's sure to be a difference.

We may also know for sure that Christ lives in us by reading the Bible. We have the promise of Jesus, as well as other writings of his disciples and Paul. (If there is time, use these references which give this promise of Jesus: John 14:16-17, 15:3-4.) As we read our Bible, we shall find standards by which to measure ourselves. Paul writes of the "fruit of the Spirit": love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Here is a measuring rod into which we may grow, but one that we shall never out-grow.

Such reading of Scripture helps us evaluate ourselves and reach for high goals—we shall reach them only as we die to self, and live to Christ. As Paul wrote: ". . . it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

At the end of one of their rehearsals, the members of the NBC Orchestra rose to pay tribute to their maestro-conductor, Arturo Toscanini. Toscanini waved them off saying, "Gentlemen! It's not me; it's Beethoven."

In the Christian life, we can say of spiritual strength and growth, "It's not me; it's Christ in me!" Reaching one's goal really does demand a surrendering of self—whether the goal be low or high. In the highest of high goals—Christian living—self must give way to Christ until He is risen indeed—in one's own life.

Risen Indeed!

I showed my friend the empty tomb, so as to prove to him that the Christ had risen from the dead.

But he believed not.

I revealed to him the broken seal and the napkin folded in a corner.

But no faith arose in him.

I set before him the written record and many other infallible proofs that my Lord was indeed alive.

But still he did not believe.

"For," he said to me, "I have looked into your heart and I find it selfish, ambitious, proud. I see that it is hot and resentful, envious and grudging. No, your Christ is dead for evermore."

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Then there came a day when I yearned over my friend and loved him as my own soul. I forgot my proofs, and remembered only his incomparable need. I gave up my argument, and merely stretched forth my hand with an aching tenderness in its touch. I became so concerned for his plan that somehow my own was forgotten and failed, and I did not care. I sought out the bruises that life had left upon his soul, and in some strange fashion I became a minister for their healing.

And then he believed!

"For," said he, "I have seen the living Christ walking in the world. I know that He indeed is risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that sleep in the charnel house of self. Yea, your Christ is alive for evermore."

For the Leader:

1. It is suggested that the chief worship period follow the discussion, as shown. However, do begin the meeting with an Easter hymn and John 20 or Matthew 28 (or both).

2. Have a terrific introduction to the topic. For example:

a. Do you have someone interested in journalism? Why not have prepared for your leaguers (or your congregation, or your community) a special news release featuring the amazing news of the Resurrection as if it happened today. (If you and your writers start early enough, you could use certain opinions or reactions in the "paper" as a springboard for your discussion groups.)

b. Use a filmstrip or slides on the Resur-

rection to lead into your topic and discussion. (Most of these are short). You could ask leaguers to think, as they watch, about such things as Jesus' foreknowledge that He would arise, how His followers must have felt before—and after—His resurrection, the reactions of Mary and the disciples, others' reactions.

c. Work out more completely a "You Are There" situation for the meeting.

3. Divide your group into three smaller discussion groups (after you have introduced the subject) and use the three capitalized questions, one for each group, as a guide for discussion. Be sure to have each group select a secretary to make a report after the group comes back together. After each report lead entire group in discussing the same question.

4. Select a panel (way ahead of time, so they will prepare) to present material on the three questions, then to make some challenging statements (perhaps more to challenge than to state a fact!) to start everyone discussing each of the questions.

5. Try to guide the discussion to point up these aims:

a. To realize the shaking *fact* of resurrection from death—the real meaning of Easter.

b. To acknowledge that being Christian is being different—because Christ lives in the Christian.

c. An honest facing of the question: *Does Christ live in me?*

6. Closing worship. This has been kept brief in order to suggest that after the middle hymn, the group form a circle facing the altar or an appropriate worship center for the rest of the service. You will need to prepare readers beforehand by marking their Bibles, or writing out the verses. (How wonderful if some people would memorize these brief passages!)

Worship:

Opening Hymn: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today 41 CYH

Scripture (Before discussion): John 20 or Matthew 28

Topic

Following discussion: (If 41 has not been used use it now at beginning of worship)

Hymn: The Day of Resurrection 43 CYH

Prayer: For Easter p. 362-363 CYH. (If circle is used, ask three or four to offer sentences of prayer.)

Scripture readings: John 11:25-26a; Rev. 1:17b-18a; II Tim. 2:11-13; Col. 3:1-4; I Cor. 3:2-3; Gal. 2:20.

Closing Hymn: Christ, the Lord, Is Risen Today 47 CYH.

ROPE OF MISSION MOTIVES

Second in a series
of topics on missions

by John Schmidt

The rope of motive that sustains the missionary enterprise of the church is composed of many strands. Not all of them are of the same strength, yet each of them forms a significant part of the whole.

I

The strongest strand is **gratitude** for the grace of God that we have experienced in our own lives. Because God has been so good to us through Jesus, ouraviour, we cannot escape the inner compulsion to do what we can to bring his will to fuller realization. And that will has been shown to us clearly. Christians must be evangelists, missionaries, voices for God to their fellow men everywhere.

No one could look himself in the face, having been saved from drowning by another, he should turn a cold shoulder to a request to give assistance to that man's family. It is even less conceivable

that someone who has seen God plunge into the mire of his own sinfulness in order to confer upon man the dignity of divine sonship, should be disinterested in God's other children. God's love is *what* we have to tell; and God's love is *why* we have to tell it.

This blessed Gospel of redemption has many valuable by-products. The attitudes and customs of the nations in which the Word of the Gospel has been heard, however inadequately, have been transformed.

Be as realistic as you can about the evils in our present civilization—and they are many, for ours is certainly not a Christian one—and you must still acknowledge the vast transformation accomplished through the power of the Gospel. The moral climate has changed for all men, in direct proportion as the Gospel has been heard and believed.

For these by-products of the Gospel we should be grateful to God. Without them we might not be alive. The skipper of a tramp steamer once mocked the "superstitious" Christian faith he found in the inhabitants of a South Sea island, but he was silenced when the chief pointed to a great stone and said, "Were it not for these 'superstitions' you and your men would already have had your brains smashed on that stone and your bodies roasted in our tribal ovens."

Certainly our gratitude to God can be shown in no more effective way than that we make our contribution toward changing the world's climate even more—through the proclamation of the Gospel to all men.

We should be grateful, also, for the fact that others believed in sending missionaries to foreign lands, since otherwise most of us would not be Christians. It was a Jew who brought Christ's salvation to Greece. In the centuries that followed, every people of Europe heard the Gospel for the first time from foreign lips. "I am under obligation" (Romans 1:14) to innumerable men from countless nations. Let us remember our debt of gratitude to them.

II

A lesser, but still significant part of the Christian motive, is **obedience**. Many of us need to take seriously the fact that our sharing in the world-wide Christian mission is not a matter of free option. This is a required, not an elective course.

A Karen student, won to the Gospel in Burma, was invited to address an American church conference on the obligation to send out missionaries to other lands. After a moment's thought he asked, "Has not Christ told them to do it?" "O yes," answered his hosts, "but we want you to remind them of their duty." They were robbed of their complacency when the Karen said, "No, if they will not mind Jesus Christ, they certainly will not mind me."

It is, in the final analysis, a question as to whether or not we mean it when we say, "Jesus is Lord." If we do, we have no alternative but to "Go into all

the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15). We are men under orders.

It is as simple, as breathtakingly essential as this: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46) A spring on a hillside can continue to be a spring only so long as it pours itself out upon the dry land below. Dammed up, it soon ceases to be a spring and is on the way to becoming a swamp. Thus the internal command of our nature coincides with the external command of our Lord.

The late Archbishop of York once said, "If what you have gained from your religion is something that you can possibly hold to yourself, without wanting to impart it to others, then it is not God's gift in the Gospel and it is not salvation. But if what you have received is the fullest of what God offers, then you cannot keep it to yourself."

How limited and hesitant has been our response. When a missionary in India preached in a village where the Gospel had never been heard, he found eager listeners. Again and again they wanted to hear the story of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection. At last came the question, "How long has it been since these wonderful things happened—one or two years ago?" What a shame that so many centuries of silence should have passed since God manifested his love to the world! When will we begin to take God's command seriously?

III

God reinforces His command with historic pressures that force men to obey. Even in the first Christian generation that pressure was necessary. Despite the Lord's command to witness for him "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) these first Christians ignored it—even as you and I. Perhaps they even rationalized their reluctance to leave Jerusalem by saying that "There are so many unbelievers right here at home." Possibly they were simply afraid or lazy.

They might have sat for a long time, and not God goaded them to action. He did it by sending a bitter persecution. Men were imprisoned and tortured. Some died. Only then did this infant church take the hint and move out of the city. The body of believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, and wherever they went they preached the Gospel. Paul says that he preached the Gospel of God's grace from "necessity" (I Cor. 9:16), as "slave rather than as a free man." In profound sense this is true of every man who has accepted God's mission.

We have experienced a similar divine compulsion in our own generation. The contemporary Christian, who has been satisfied to leave the study and support of foreign missions to someone else, suddenly found himself in a world that had no meaningful borders.

Quadalcanal became as meaningful as Alamazoo; Dakar, as Denver. We had to learn the hard way, but we learned. There isn't any way by which a man can escape being a citizen of the whole world.

How tragic, if God must take recourse to such violent tactics to arouse us to obedient action. Yet the whole of recorded history, in and out of the Bible, bears its testimony to the fact that no man neglects the commands of God without paying the consequences.

IV

In a Lutheran evangelism mission in Brooklyn, recently, a teen-ager said to the regional director, "Pastor, what this mission needs is a slogan."

"But we have one," was the answer. You know, "Share Christ Today." . . .

"O, but I mean something catchy. Like, 'The soul you save may be your own.'"

Everyone laughed. Then they realized that this said exactly what a lot of us are slowly coming to recognize.

An earlier generation thrilled to the tragic tale of "The man who lost his country" as the result of his refusal to acknowledge the responsibilities of an officer in the armed forces. At the story's climax, the man breaks down when he reads the words of Sir Walter Scott:

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*"Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?"*

But the poet continues,

*"That wretch, concentered all in self,
Living shall forfeit fair renown
And, doubly dying, shall go down
Into the vile dust from which he
sprung:
Unwept, unhonored and unsung."*

"Concentered all in self"—is that not a fitting epitaph also for the man who denies his Christian loyalty, the obligations of God's divine commission? The privileges of **Kingdom citizenship** can belong only to those who acknowledge its responsibilities.

A man—or a congregation—that is wrapped up in itself makes an insignificant package. It is only when he loses himself in a great cause that he touches the hem of greatness. "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it." (Luke 17:33).

It is this: What can God do with the well-to-do people who give him only a nickel each week for missions? Not much until they have quit thinking of God's mission in such petty terms.

How many Luther Leagues have failed because their leaders sought to attract members with the siren call, "Come, eat and be entertained," instead of Christ's call. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

Even "evangelism visitors" have been diverted from their tasks of winning men to faith in Christ, to adding more meaningless names to our membership lists. Little wonder that such evangelism fails to excite anyone.

Whenever such distortions occur, there is a dual tragedy. One is the tragedy of those who should be helped, but are not.

The other is the tragedy of those whom God intends to grow in grace, but who do not. A few years ago, E. Stanley Jones, once more enroute to India, was asked by reporters for a final message to the churches of America. It was, "Before the church can go farther, it must go deeper." Then, surely, we will pray with Miriam Teichner:

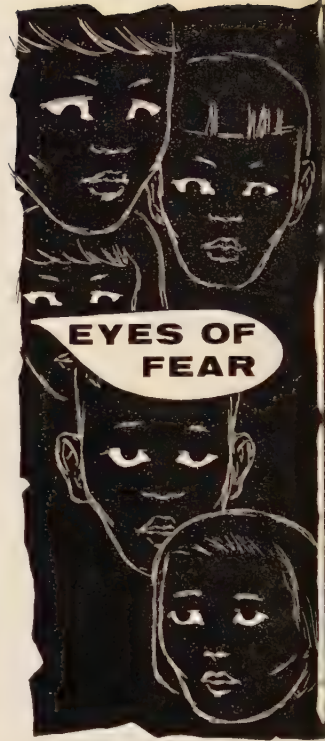
*God—let me be aware.
 Stab my soul fiercely with others' pain,
 Let me walk, seeing horror and stain,
 Let my hands, groping, find other
 hands,
 Give me the heart that divines, un-
 derstands,
 Give me the courage, wounded, to
 fight,
 Flood me with knowledge, drench me
 in light,
 Please, keep me eager just to do my
 share.
 God—let me be aware.*

Then great will be our joy—and Christ's victory.

Topic Suggestions

Have four people present the sections of this topic. Have a brief discussion following each—a discussion of the motive.

Why should gratitude be a motive? Think through: "God's love is *what* we have to tell; and God's love is *why* we have to tell it." Why does obedience call us to support missions? Are we "forced" into it? What "historic pressures" move us to witness overseas? What's wrong with "The soul you save may be your own"? What responsibilities are there in Kingdom citizenship?



Do you have these
mission flyers?

Order from LLA



Aim: To demonstrate the meaning and the use of the liturgical colors.

Secondary aim: To show how green, the color of the Trinity, signifies growth.

Topic for Trinity:

GREEN IS FOR GROWTH

by H. Lee Walker

The Church, ancient and modern, has used colors upon the altar as an aid to worship. The Church indicates seasons of the Church calendar with colors. In the color changes, the Church points out moods of religious experience and religious confession.

In the color spectrum, each color has its significance. Look at a chart of the color spectrum, and you will see the liturgical colors as color bases.

The Liturgical Colors

White

White is the color of perfection. It

represents perfect glory, beauty, holiness, and joy. Innocence is also suggested by white. White, then is associated logically with the high feasts of the Lord. It reminds us also of the complete revelation of God's love in Christ Jesus.

White is used on the altar during Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and on Trinity Sunday.

Red

Red is the color of our life blood, and appropriately typifies the shed blood of the Church's confessors and martyrs. Red is preeminently the color of the Holy Ghost, and it indicates the Church in her work.

Red is used on the altar on Pentecost, the day on which the Holy Spirit was out-

poured on the Church. It is used also on the Reformation Festival, and all local festivals, such as Thanksgiving, anniversaries, and dedications.

Black

Black symbolizes humiliation, sadness, and deep mourning. Specifically, it symbolizes the death of Christ on the cross.

It is used only once in the church; that time is on Good Friday, the day on which Christ was crucified.

Violet

Violet is the color of repentance and preparation. It reminds men that sin results in death. Lowest in the color spectrum, it is farthest away from red and nearest black.

Violet is used during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent. While Advent is not wholly penitential in the character of its celebration, it takes its color from that phase of its nature.

Green

Green is the color of life and victory. It symbolizes hope and peace. It reminds us of the eternity and permanence of our Christian faith, and the freshness of our religious hope.

Green is the very center of the spectrum and the other colors revolve around it as upon their axis.

Green represents growth and symbolizes life. It is used during the Sundays of the Trinity Season.

The Green World

Johnny raised his head from his geography book and looked out the window. "Too bad," he thought, "that I have to study geography."

He noticed the green grass that grew on the lawn of the school yard. "Now," he thought, "why can't I be just like a stem of that grass? All I would have to do is use the sunshine, absorb the rain, and grow. Now I have to sit here and study geography from a book. I think I'd

rather just be a piece of grass."

Johnny glanced up at the blackboard and saw the quotation for the day that the teacher had printed neatly on the board. *For one to achieve success, one must grow a little every day. Learning is half of growing.*

Johnny looked outside again. The spring day smelled of freshness and life. He looked at the grass again and thought of the color green.

"Gee, I wonder how many plants I see. They are all green. Green is as much a part of the plant as the stem itself. Green in the plant is life itself.

"If I want to grow just like that plant I guess I will have to finish this geography lesson. For me, learning is half of growing."

Green in nature is life itself, and life is growth. When the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are within a person, there is life. As long as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are working in the Christian, there is continual growth. It is fitting then that green, the symbol of life, should be placed on the Christian altar during the Trinity Season of the Christian Church.

Have you ever listened to a conversation like this?

"Is that guy ever a green horn! Today he missed the signal to steal home and cost us the ball game. Not only that, but once he hit a high pitched ball to the short stop that would have been the fourth ball for a walk!"

"I don't think he's much of a green horn. The signal wasn't given to him right. And the ball he hit was a curve that floated high and away."

"Never! I say he's a green horn! Green horns don't have enough experience. They need more time to learn. They're still green. In other words, he wasn't physically able to play in the game. He didn't have enough practice."

In this conversation, the green horn was someone who hadn't learned enough or didn't train completely, for a certain event. By learning and trying, the green horn probably could overcome his "green horn weakness" and become a mature baseball player.

In the Trinity Season of the Church

H. Lee Walker, a graduate of Susquehanna University, is now in the Armed service.

the Gospel and the Epistle for the day are written in a progressing manner. Each Sunday in the Trinity Season, from the Bible, we are given directions for growth from a green horn Christian into a mature Christian. Read the Bible selections carefully.

Suggested Program Outline

Psalm 150; Hymn 505 (CSB); Scripture, John 1:1-15; Hymn 424 (CSB); Prayer (Page 53, Number 15, *Christian Youth Hymnal*); Matching Test; Presentation of the Colors; The Green World; Hymn 134 (CSB); Benediction; Games and activity.

To the Leader

Introduction. Begin with the matching test. Have it typed on paper so that each one may have a copy—or copy it on the blackboard and work on it as a group. The matching test could be used as a game before the meeting begins.

Colors. Ask your pastor if you may use the altar cloths to illustrate the liturgical colors. The colors are assigned to five people. As each person reads a description of a color, the parament of that color is displayed.

If someone has a chemistry set, use the chemicals to present the first part of this topic. The set contains formulas for producing various colors. Have most of the preparation done beforehand. Then as the description of each liturgical color is read, pour water into the glass, revealing that color.

Additional information on liturgical colors can be found in *The Sign Language of Our Faith*, Griffith; *Signs and Symbols in Christian*

Art, Ferguson; and *Our Christian Symbols*, Rest.

Classroom scene. Rather than read the scene in the classroom, have it acted out. Very few props needed. You might add a teacher and Johnny could discuss growth in plant-life and in humans. Following the skit, the leader could present the rest of the topic material.

A game. Divided into two teams (more if there are a good many at the meeting). Each team is given a *Common Service Book*. Going from one team to another, give a page number from 51-127. The contestant opens that page, reads the day of the year, and must tell you what the color is for that Season. If he gives the correct color, his team gets 10 points. If he gives an incorrect color, his team gets no points. Move from one team to another as in a spelling bee. The team with the highest number of points wins.

Activity. Make a color chart for the league room (you could make one for the altar Guild also or one to hang in the sacristy where the paraments are stored. Draw a large circle on a piece of art paper. Fill in the colors in the pie-shaped spaces. Look on page 293 for correct colors of the paraments.

Make a list of devotional readings for each leaguer. Copy the references for the Epistles and Gospels through the Trinity Season (found on pages 91-118 of the CSB).

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday, John 14:23-31; Monday, Ephesians 4:1-6; Tuesday, Matthew 12:30-33; Wednesday, Psalm 19; Thursday, Matthew 6:24-34; Friday, I Peter 5:6-11; Saturday, Galatians 5:24 to 6:10.

White—

Black—

Liturgical—

Red—

Violet—

Martyr—

Green—

- a. is the color of life and victory. It is also the color of hope and peace.
- b. one who undergoes severe or constant suffering, or even death, on behalf of his belief.
- c. is the color of repentance and preparation. It is also the color of humility and self-communion.
- d. symbolizes sadness, deep mourning, and death. It is associated with sin in the Old Testament.
- e. is an established or customary formulae for public worship.
- f. is the color of fire and blood. This color symbolizes the Holy Spirit.
- g. is the color of perfection, innocence, and holiness. It is also a festive color.

Black—

Green—

Violet—

Red—

White—

- A. Trinity Season.
- B. Advent and Lent.
- C. Good Friday.
- D. Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, and Trinity Sunday.
- E. Pentecost, Reformation Festivals, and local festivals.

P E R S O N

to

P E R S O N

by Velma Pomrenke

Sister Velma Pomrenke is parish
deaconess at St. Paul's Lutheran
Church, Teaneck, New Jersey.

TO THE LEADER:

This topic is written as a complete program guide for Intermediates. Step by step it will attempt to tell the Leaguer how to develop it. The aims of this topic are three-fold: (1) to try to convey what worship is; (2) to try to give the group a good worship experience; (3) to suggest techniques and resources for planning worship services. The topic is based on the TV program "Person to Person". The worship blends into the topic, so all details must be taken care of well in advance.

SETTING:

Lights are turned off and a spotlight is turned on the fellow taking the part of Ed. Tomorrow. As the dialogue changes from one person to another, the spot will follow, simulating the changing of scenes on a TV screen. The spot should be on Betty and Bob most of the time but occasionally can change to Ed. If two lights are available, it would be easy to spot the scenes.

ED. L. MORROW: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Tonight we are going to take you to the home of two very fine young people in a small town. Their names are Bob and Betty Daniels. Bob and Betty are typical teen-agers, in a good number of activities at school and also very much interested in their young people's organization called the intermediate Luther League. (*Spotlight shifts to the two young people sitting in comfortable chairs.*) Good evening, Bob and Betty.

BOB and BETTY: Good evening, Mr. Morrow.

ED: Well, I see I have caught you two at home this evening.

BETTY: Not for long, Mr. Morrow.

ED: Like all young people nowadays, you're into a lot of things. What are some of your activities?

BOB: Well, Mr. Morrow, I like to play football. That takes up quite a bit of time. I'm also on the student council at school.

BETTY: And don't forget Luther League. That takes up a lot of our time, too.

ED: That's really what I wanted to ask you about. With all these other activities, how do you find time for Luther League?

BOB: Well, Mr. Morrow, I guess it's a matter of making time to do the things you think are important. To us, Luther League is important because we get so much out of it. As a matter of fact, we are going to a Luther League meeting tonight.

ED: What will you be doing at this meeting?

BETTY: We're looking forward to a very interesting time. The kids are putting on a skit called "How Can I Feel The Presence of God?" Bob and I are responsible for the worship.

ED: That certainly does sound interesting. But what's this about worship? What is worship anyway?

BOB: Well, Mr. Morrow, that's what we'll be talking about tonight—but it seems to me that worship is coming face to face with God. It's almost like you're doing tonight. You come into our home to visit. When we worship, we come into God's presence. Of course, it's more than just a visit—it's a time when we think about how wonderful God is.

BETTY: And it's a time when we can tell God about our problems and ask His help.

ED: I suppose you could say that instead of it being "person to person," worship is really "person to God." But tell me, do you always feel like you're in the presence of God when you worship?

BOB: Not always, Mr. Morrow. Sometimes there are distractions that make you forget you are in the presence of God, like somebody not knowing how to pronounce the words in the Scripture. Or the fellow who's supposed to be leading the worship, madly scrambling through the book looking for another hymn. That's why we think it's so important to plan worship services well.

ED: How do you go about this planning?

BETTY: We knew what the topic was going to be tonight, Mr. Morrow, so our worship is going to be on the same theme—feeling the presence of God. It's almost time for the meeting, so why don't you join us? You can worship with us and then we can talk about it afterwards.

ED: I would like that very much. Why don't you go ahead and I'll join you there. (*Light changes to the group and the worship center, which can be a table with flowers and a Bible, or cross and candles. It should be neat and attractive. Leaguers should have Christian Youth*

Hymnals before the meeting begins. Bob takes his place in front of the group and leads in the worship. Various people should take part in the service.)

Call to Worship: Psalm 95:6,7

Hymn: "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee" 60 CYH

Scripture: Psalm: 84: 1-4, 10-12

*Story: (read by Betty) CAN WE SEE GOD?**

"Can anyone see God?" a boy once asked his father. He had heard some men at the store talking about Him, and he wanted to know the answer—oh! so very much.

"No," answered the father. The boy was timid, very timid. He said no more, but wandered away down the path toward the woods, thinking. He came at last to the river's edge and sat there and pondered the question over and over. There were trees and birds all around him, and, as he sat still, he watched the birds build their nests. Other days he came to the same spot and saw them train their young. Often he looked up at the sky through the leafy branches, longing to see God.

One day a noted teacher came to dinner. The boy could hardly wait to have a private talk with him. At last the opportunity came, but the great man answered his question by saying that God is a Spirit and that no one can see Him. The boy went out, deeply disappointed.

Time passed and one day he met an old fisherman. They went down to the river edge to fish together and soon a real friendship grew up between them. The boy's father learned of this new friendship and called the boy to ask about his new friend.

"Is he a good man?" asked the father.

"I like him," was the boy's reply.

"What does he talk about?" the father wanted to know.

"Well," said the boy, "he doesn't talk very much, but I'll tell you how he acts. Yesterday evening we had quit fishing and were drifting down the river. The sun was setting and the sky was pretty and red. I looked at him and saw tears in his eyes as he was looking at the sky, and . . ."

"That will be alright," said the father. "I guess you are safe with him."

The next evening the boy and the old fisherman were again drifting down the river. And again the glory of the setting sun was shining through the trees and reflecting a rosy path on the river. The tears were once more in the old fisherman's eyes as he reverently gazed westward. Timidly, the boy reached over and touched the arm of his companion. The old man did not turn his head but kept looking toward the beauty of the sunset.

"Can you see God?" the boy ventured. There was no answer. Very gently, but very persistently, the boy pulled the old man's sleeve. "Please tell me, won't you? Can anyone see God?"

The boy waited breathlessly. Finally the old man turned a tear stained face toward the boy and said tenderly, "Son, it's getting so I can't see anything else."

*Anne H. Rankin in *Youth Looking to Jesus* by Hoyt & Dabney. Copyright, 1954, by John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia. Used by permission.

The boy, gazing into the transfigured face, heard the old fisherman's words and was satisfied.

Poem:

*I had walked life's way with an easy tread,
Had followed where comforts and pleasures led,
Until one day in a quiet place,
I met the Master face to face.*

*With station and rank and wealth for my goal,
Much thought for my body but none for my soul,
I had entered to win in life's mad race;
When I met the Master, face to face.*

*I met Him and knew Him and blushed to see
That His eyes full of sorrow were fixed on me;
I faltered and fell at His feet that day,
While my castles melted and vanished away.*

*Melted and vanished, and in their place
Not else did I see but the Master's face.
And I cried aloud, "Oh, make me meet
To follow the steps of Thy wounded feet!"*

*My thought is now for the souls of men,
I have lost my life to find it again,
E'er since one day in a quiet place,
I met the Master face to face.*

Offering: (A hymn may be played softly while offering is received.)
Prayer (In unison) No. 17, p. 364, CYH

(A moment of silence and the spot shifts back to Ed. L. Morrow. Bob and Betty remain with the group.)

ED: That was a very fine worship service. Is it like this every Sunday?

BOB: Oh no, Mr. Morrow. Young people like variety—they like to have things that are different—that makes it so much more interesting. Sometimes, instead of singing the hymn the way we usually do, we *read* the words together.

BETTY: Sometimes we use a speech choir for reading the Scripture—or for prayer we might use guided prayer—or read the words of a prayer hymn together—or use a litany, you know, where the leader gives a prayer and the kids respond with "We give thee thanks, O Lord", or something like that. There are umpteen different things you can do.

ED: I can see where your league isn't going to get into a rut. Now tell me, how did you go about planning this service?

BETTY: Well, Mr. Morrow, we knew a long time ago that we would have to do this. We also knew what the topic was going to be, so the first thing we did was pick a theme—and the logical one seemed to be "the presence of God." In looking for a hymn we found the words of "Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee" just hit the spot.

BOB: When we started to look for a suitable Bible passage, Mr. Morrow, we used our trusty *Christian Youth Hymnal*. This is our good right

hand man in planning worship services. At the back of the book, on page 406 there is a list of topics. We looked under worship and there we found Psalm 84—longing for the worship of God. That was for us. (*Bob illustrates with the CYH as he talks.*)

BETTY: We found the story in a book of worship services called *Youth Looking To Jesus*. We find it has a lot of good stories and worship helps in it. The poem was in there too. There are some other good books on worship, too.

BOB: Our CYH came in handy again when we looked for a prayer. Starting on page 361 are a number of prayers that can be used at different times. We found the one on page 364 filled our bill beautifully. Sometimes when we can't find exactly what we want, we write our own prayer.

ED: I noticed you had someone else give the Call to Worship and another fellow read the Scripture. Why did you do that, Bob?

BOB: Well, Mr. Morrow, I think it's good for more than just one person to have something to do. All the kids should have a chance sometime or another to have at least a part in leading devotions. Of course, they have to know in plenty of time what they are supposed to do.

ED: I noticed you used a worship center. Is it always like that?

BOB: No, Mr. Morrow, sometimes we work out a worship service around a picture. You can use a slide projected on a screen for this. If we're out of doors, of course the beauty of nature becomes our worship center.

ED: Have you any suggestions for those who have to lead worship, Betty?

BETTY: Two things, Mr. Morrow. One—be sure you're ready and know what you're going to do. Two—because you're the leader, you must be worshipful and reverent if you expect the kids to do the same.

ED: Bob and Betty, keep up the good work. I'm sure that other fellows and gals have learned something from you tonight. When their turn comes to prepare and lead a worship service, they'll have something of the know-how of it. Thank you again and good night.

BOB and BETTY: Thank you, Mr. Morrow. Good night.

THINGS TO DO

1. Let's take a voyage of exploration through the *Christian Youth Hymnal*. Notice page vii. (Division of hymns into various categories); page 299 (how to lead worship); page 308 (several orders of service); page 343 (psalms and canticles, look on page 385 to see what a canticle is); page 361 (prayers); page 385 (terms used in worship); page 403 (Bible passages on which hymns are based); page 406 (topics with hymns, psalms and Scripture). These are tools that you can use in working out worship services.

2. Make a chart of the meetings coming up in the next month or two. Put down the names of leaguers who will be responsible for the topic, devotions, recreation, etc.

3. Variety is the spice of life. On a black-

board list various ways in which hymns, prayer, Scripture, etc., could be used in worship service. See if each leaguer can think of one different thing. Your list might look something like this:

Hymns—reading with or without background music, antiphonal singing, hymn study, words read silently while someone plays the tune, solo, recording, etc.

Scripture—speech choir, responsive reading, poems, various translations, reading in unison, etc.

Prayer—Silent, guided, unison, sentence, free, litanies, prayer hymns, etc.

4. How about adding one or two good books on worship to your League library. (If you don't have a library, maybe you could start one).

FORGIVE AND FORGET

How often should
we forgive others?

All of us have different characteristics—color of hair and eyes, fair or dark skin, large or small build, and individual markings such as freckles, dimples, or exceptionally white teeth.

Have you ever realized that you are nearly always judged by the things you say and the things you do! Think of this a moment. Is it true concerning *your* friends? What do you like or dislike about them? If the things you say and do have such an important place in developing your personality and friendship, you should be especially careful of how you act.

Have you ever heard something similar to this? "My mother and father think they know everything. They just don't understand me." . . . "She didn't bother to invite me to her party, so I certainly won't bother to invite her to mine. I'll show her a thing or two." . . . "He's so 'uppity' just because he's Mr. Jones' son. I just won't bother to speak to him if he can't speak to me." . . . "She wears the most terrible looking clothes to school. I wouldn't want to be seen with her." . . . He doesn't have any friends, so you needn't think I'll be the first one to talk with him!"

Why do we say things to hurt other people or to *get even*? Perhaps because we want to feel important. It is natural for each one of us to want to feel important, but we can be important without making cutting remarks. When someone does something that hurts us or says something we do not like, our first desire is to say something back so that we feel we have not been left "holding the bag." However, Christ has a better way. He tells us that as we grow in our Christ-like life, we learn to love one another and to forgive those who wrong us. Also as we learn to love as He loves, we lose our desire to say remarks to get even. Let us turn to His Word and see some of the things He has to tell us.

Mrs. Carroll Hill is active in her local church in Talahassee, Florida.

Moments With God

Matthew 5:38-48. This passage tells us that we must not live by the saying "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (which is the same as getting even with someone), but we must love those who hate us as well as those who love us. It is easier to love those who are easiest to love, isn't it? Christ says we must love *all* people.

Matthew 7:1-5. Here we are shown that it is easier to see the mistakes of others than it is to see our own. All of us have faults, and it is most important that we learn to recognize our own before we so readily criticize others.

Luke 23:34. As Christ hung on the cross, did he hate or "hold grudges" against those who crucified him? He said, "Father, *forgive* them, for they know not what they do." Can we improve on His example?

Matthew 18:21-35. This is the passage of Scripture where Christ tells us that we must not have any hard feelings toward anyone. We must forgive as often as we have wrong done to us. God forgives us through the death of His Son. We can share His forgiveness with others.

I Thessalonians 5:15. One of the best lessons is taught here. We must not repay one wrong deed with another. If we are wronged, Paul tells us to do a good deed in return. This is a hard lesson to learn, but one of greatest importance.

Luke 17:3, 4; Matthew 6:14, 15; Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 5:22-24.

Food for Thought and Discussion

What is forgiveness? The dictionary says that to forgive is to pardon. When one pardons he puts out of his mind completely the wrong that has been done him. He forgets it; this is a part of forgiveness. As long as you remember what someone has done to you, you are

liable to hold a grudge against that person. Therefore, you must pardon the wrong, and put it out of your mind.

Why should you forgive and forget? Christ tells us that if we truly love Him we will love everyone who he has created. You will find that you are much happier when you love others, because that is how God wants it. Is one of us more precious to God than another? He loves all of us, even when we do wrong. The least we can do is love our fellow men who are also children of God.

What should you do when someone wrongs you? Your natural reaction is to slap back. That only pours oil on the fire! It's been said, "It takes two to make a fight." This statement is true in every sense. Anyone who does or says something wrong expects a fuss in return. Think back to the Scripture passage in *I Thessalonians 5:15*. Here you are told to repay evil with good. If you make no cutting remarks in return for a person's harm to you, there is absolutely no way the other person can continue his wrong doing. There is not a second person to keep the fight going. By remaining calm you will find that you feel good inside and that is because you will have pleased God!

What if mother and dad make mistakes? All people make mistakes. Mother and Dad make them, and you and I do. We need strength and understanding from God in order to know how to handle mistakes. When mother and dad make mistakes, try to be helpful in understanding, rather than feel glad. Rubbing in other people's mistakes is not the same as forgiving and forgetting. Remember *you* make mistakes every day just as other people do. Not forgiving is a big mistake within itself.

Do Unto Others

One of the most important things to remember in deciding how to deal with the mistakes of others is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." If you have the feeling that you would like to laugh at someone else's mistake or make a cutting remark in return, ju

to ask yourself: Would I like to have that remark made to me? Would I like to have a grudge held against me? Do I ever make mistakes myself? How does that person feel when I laugh at him? I never say or do wrong things? Am I always perfect? Would God like for me to make fun of someone else's wrongdoing?

Christ has taught us to be ready to forgive whenever the occasion arises. Only when we forget the wrong done have we actually forgiven. Don't ever be lazy in saying, "I can forgive what was done, but I'll never forget it." If that is the true feeling, then the deed is not forgiven.

Ask God in prayer for help in working and being with others in school organizations, church, at home with the family, and with people who perhaps are less fortunate than you. Study God's Word for clues in how to get along with people. Listen to Mother and Dad as they try to teach. They have made many mistakes and learned many lessons and they will be glad to guide you so you don't make the same mistakes. How we overcome this is important! It is also important to help others learn from their mistakes by our forgiveness.

Conclusion

Christ set a perfect example for us when he asked His heavenly Father to forgive those who crucified Him. You will remember His words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." In teaching, he has said to forgive not seven times but "seventy times seven." God never asks us to do anything too great for us. We must love if we are His children.

We as Christians have an example to follow for those people with whom we live, work, play, or pass on the streets. We have a duty as Christians to love our neighbor as ourselves. We must show our Christian spirit by letting our lights shine before men that they will see our good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." We must live our lives for God since He has created us for that purpose.

WANTED—A MESSENGER

Anonymous

*The Lord Christ wanted a tongue one day,
To speak a message of cheer
To a heart that was weary and worn and
sad,
Weighed down with a mighty fear.
He asked for mine, but 'twas busy quite,
With my own affairs from morn till night.*

*The Lord Christ wanted a hand one day
To do a loving deed;
He wanted two feet on an errand for
Him,
To run with gladsome speed,
But I had need of my own that day;
To His gentle beseeching I answered,
"Nay".*

*So all that day I used my tongue,
My hands, and my feet as I chose;
I said some hasty, bitter words
That hurt one heart, God knows.
I busied my hands with worthless play,
And my willful feet went a crooked way.*

*While the dear Lord grieved, with His
work undone,
For the lack of a willing heart!
Only through men does He speak to men,
Dumb must He be apart.
I do not know, but I wish today,
I had let the Lord Christ have His way.*

Topic Suggestions

In the section called Moments with God, have someone read the Scripture references. Then, as a group, discuss the verses in the light of the topic. Comments written in that section should be enlarged upon.

Probably there are more questions that will be Food for Thought and Discussion. Think of personal experiences in the group. Bring out any true incidents that individuals can think of. Again, enlarge upon the material given here.

If you have a mimeograph machine handy (even a blackboard and pencils and paper will do), why not begin the topic with some personal evaluation questions: Have I made any mistakes today? Have other people wronged me? Have I each time forgiven them? Have I lost any friends because I couldn't forgive and forget their mistakes?



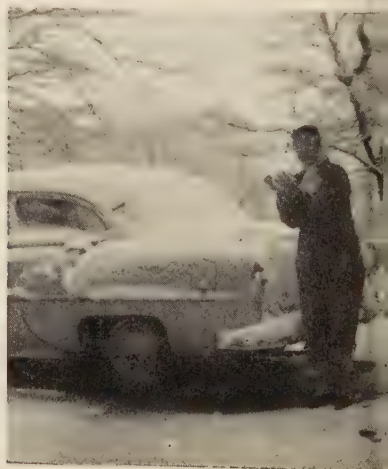
Outdoor Studying

Always Eating



*L. D. M.
Baltimore*

Winter Fun



*June
Goes
Dancing*



Dear Diary:

September 19. Here at last! The Baltimore Deaconess School. We call it LDM (Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse—the home for retired deaconesses). I have two roommates—Mary is going to be a church secretary; June, a parish worker. I'm the only deaconess student in the dorm. What fun this evening at the pajama party! I had to wash an imaginary elephant!

September 26. Things are really hustling. Church history, doctrine, Bible study, and other classes, together with teaching in weekday church school, should keep me fairly well occupied. My first work assignment is cleaning the room—helps cut down my expenses!

October 13. Could say so much about the speaker at our study group tonight. The study group is called Cencrean Circle because Phoebe, the first deaconess, is recorded in Romans, was from Cencrea). Sister Janet told us about work among the Indians in our country. Our fellowship ended with refreshments at the faculty residence.

October 26. Quite an interesting day. I observed a kindergarten class in Sunday school. This afternoon we walked around the nearby housing development and went through several houses. This evening at L.S.A. we heard a speaker from British Columbia. This L.S.A. is made up of students from four or five colleges in the Baltimore area.

November 9. Tonight was my turn on switchboard. It can be so amusing and so confusing. With three calls coming in, I hooked up Carl with Edna instead of Anna. Otherwise, the evening was fairly quiet and I studied for my test in Old Testament.

November 30. How very marvelous our Advent Retreat was today. Pastor Reese led the Bible study and group discussions. The subject for the retreat was prayer. I have gathered so much from today's activities.

December 12. After morning classes we had fun with Herkimer—our friendly snowman. I'm getting excited thinking about Christmas. Decorating, parties, caroling. Tomorrow night we have our Hanging of the Greens Party. The seniors say it is a fabulous party. First we have a devotional service in which various means of decorating are explained. Then we divide into groups and do the decorating all over the house. I'm in charge of the decorating in the green living room.

December 16. Tonight we threw a party for the faculty and their families. How delightful watching Pastor Folkemer's children play.

December 21. At 6:30 this morning, we served coffee and toast to the faculty (breakfast in bed). On each tray was a lighted candle. We caroled as we entered their rooms.

February 14. Dear Diary, I'm sorry—

This topic was written by four students at the Philadelphia Lutheran Deaconess School: Barbara Schubaur, Lynette Harris, Edna Hughes, and Millicent Drake.

we're just so busy! How I wish I could write all the things that we have crowded into these wonderful months, but there just isn't time. Tonight I was as excited as my roommate as I helped her get dressed for the Valentine Ball at Gettysburg Seminary. June looked beautiful as she came down the winding staircase in her blue gown.

April 29. I took first place in badminton and table tennis at sports night tonight. This ends the sports tournament. We really worked up a big appetite for the food that topped off the evening—hoagies (the food here is just too good; I'm gaining weight!)

April 30. Today we had a picnic for our weekday church school children. The work we put into lesson plans, gathering equipment, teaching, and evaluations certainly has been worthwhile. It's marvelous to see children grow as you touch them with Christian love. And, I myself, have grown through my experiences.

May 23. The juniors were in charge of the banquet for the seniors. We had fried chicken and strawberry shortcake—of course, lots in between. I was bequeathed Shirley's ability to slide down the banister—they thought this might speed me up. This has been an evening to remember.

May 26. Graduation today on the front lawn. The president of Thiel College spoke. Afterwards, we had a buffet lunch out of doors. Dick came to get June. Many of the girls left with their parents. I leave tomorrow by bus. It hardly seems possible that the year is over. Time really flies when you are enjoying yourself.

September 10. Got settled into my new room at the Philadelphia School. Good to see several classmates from last year. The Baltimore School trains young women for secretarial and Christian educational work. At the Philadelphia School we are trained in the field of health and welfare.

September 23. Well, classes have started and today I put in my first day of practice work. Right now I'm at a home for the aged. Will work here two days a week. During this year, I will have ex-

perience in four different agencies of our Church.

September 30. Today eight of the deaconesses celebrated anniversaries in the diaconate. Six sisters had silver anniversaries, one her fortieth anniversary, and one her golden anniversary. Dr. Francis Shearer spoke at the service. What a thrill to have served that many years as a deaconess.

October 16. Pulled myself out of bed 4:30 this morning. All the students went to the ULCA convention in Harrisburg. The Board of Deaconess Work presented each of the students studying at the two deaconess Schools. The students are from all over the United States and Canada. Central Penn has the highest number. Got to see my pastor and some of the delegates from home. Was interested in seeing people whose names I have heard. Now I can connect names and faces when I read about their activities.

December 15. Tonight we had an Advent Party. It was the annual St. Luke Festival. I was a bit frightened as I came down the stairs with my crown of seven lighted candles. But it was fun and an interesting way to learn some Christmas traditions and customs.

February 10. What a milestone. Today I was invested. I was thrilled as I stood before the altar and received the title "Sister." I feel a real commitment to serve God through deaconess service. Now I can look forward to graduation a year of field work, and then my consecration as a deaconess.

March 9. Lenten Retreat. How worthwhile these retreats are. I wish everyone in a role as a leader could see the value in "going aside" for a day (as Jesus did) to receive new inspiration for dedicated service.

April 6. Today was my first day at the Philadelphia Youth Study Center. Each Saturday my classmates and I will be teaching here.

May 18. My second milestone has come so quickly. Today I was graduated. The service was beautiful—the message made a real impression. I took some of the guests on a tour of the building. The

ought it was a terrific place. If I could only put into words what these two years at the Deaconess Schools have done for me.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE LEADER:

There are various ways of presenting this topic. The girls might dramatize the diary, using pictures and imagination to fill in the details and create a plot. Perhaps two or three people could work together and write this material in the form of a letter and share it with the others as coming from one of the Deaconess members. Different people can present different phases of the life at the Deaconess School. A discussion can be started by asking what leaguers think life at the school would be like.

If you have had a deaconess field secretary speak to your group before, you might like to talk about some of the things she said or their might be questions about what was said. Perhaps you would like to have a field secretary come to speak to the group. Talk to your pastor about it! For the answers to the questions raised above, and others, write to Sister Mildred Winter, Board of Deaconess Work, 1228 Bruce Street, Philadelphia, Pa. The film, "She Lives for You" would also be helpful. Ask for pamphlets describing the work and the training.

One of the ways to follow up this topic would be to get information on the Life Service weekends that are planned by the Deaconess Schools. These weekends are held twice a year at each School. The conferences are planned to acquaint teenagers with the program and life of the Deaconess Schools. Perhaps a scholarship could be arranged for one of your girls to attend! Write to Sister Mildred for the details.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

For what are these girls training? Why must

Recreation



they go to two Deaconess Schools? What are the requirements for entering the Schools? What do they study? What is investiture? Consecration? Why do they wear a garb?

WORSHIP:

Service of Personal Rededication—p. 329 CYH
Hymn—85 CYH

Scripture—Mark 1:16-20

Prayer—No. 66, p. 375; No. 61, p. 374

Hymn—266 CYH

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

John 15:1-17—Why go into fulltime church service?

Mark 8:27-33—In order to do Christ's work, we must have faith and know what we believe in. Christ is our first Teacher. Through studying God's Holy Word, we are instructed by Him. There is much to learn!

Mark 6:7-13, 30-32—We learn by doing. This is one of the ways Christ prepared His disciples to carry on His work. Even so, we learn the same way.

Philippians 1:3-11—We are all partners in Christ—in all that we do—sharing work and play, joy and burdens, success and disappointments—doing all to the glory of God.

Acts 4:23-31—What strength and joy we receive through worshipping together!



Investiture

THEY MET JESUS

—in the business world

—in the home and community

Two Topics

By Bryce W. Shoemaker



I

IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

(Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-17)

Stock markets are confusing, but interesting. Dozens of men buying and selling thousands of dollars worth of stock in a few minutes. Or think of a large department store—how much money does it handle in a day's business? How many trucks does it take to bring the goods to the store? How large is the payroll for the employees in any week? There are thousands of such large corporations employing millions of people and handling millions of dollars and tons of goods in our contemporary world.

Business in Jesus' day, however, was not so complicated. There were no stock markets and no large department stores. Craftsmen made articles which they sold themselves. Farmers brought their produce to markets in the villages and towns and sold them directly to the people. In fact, much of the business was carried on by bartering or exchanging one type of goods for another. In Jesus' day there was no "middle man."

Five Men

In the two Bible lessons which form the basis for this topic there are five men who were in business in Jesus' day. Four of them—Peter, Andrew, John and James—were fishermen who fished in the Sea of Galilee. Probably their boats were twenty or twenty-four feet long, and they used nets to bring in the fish. They sold the fish fresh in the market places of Capernaum, Nain, and other towns on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. They might go to the trouble of cleaning and gutting the fish, but usually they would do this only if they couldn't sell all that they caught. They began to fish very early in the morning while it was still dark and took their catch to the market place not

long after sun-up to sell to the housewives who came for their daily provisions.

Many times, no doubt, they didn't have enough fish to sell, and, thus, couldn't purchase all of the things they needed for their own living. There is a story of Peter fishing all night long and not catching anything. The story is told in the 21st chapter of John. "Jesus said to them, 'Children have you any fish?' They answered Him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in for the quantity of fish."

The other person in our Bible lesson is Matthew (Levi) who was a tax collector. Tax collectors were Roman officials. Matthew was Jewish but was permitted by the Romans to collect taxes. The tax collectors erected toll gates on roads and at bridges and in harbors. They collected duty on goods carried to market and on wares transported from one city to another. They often taxed very common things like salt. Tax collectors were despised by the Pharisees and were often grouped with what the New Testament calls sinners and heathens. Jesus seems to have been the friend of the tax collectors. Matthew's toll booth was on the important highway going north and south along the Sea of Galilee right outside the city of Capernaum where Jesus made His home during His public ministry.

What Attracted Them?

These five men were business men of Jesus' day. The Bible tells us of what seems to have been Jesus' first contact with these men. However, probably Jesus had had other contact with them. No doubt He went to the same synagogue that the four fishermen attended on the Sabbath Day. Perhaps He passed Matthew's toll booth on many occasions and stopped to pass the time of day with him. It would seem at least that these men would not leave their businesses to follow Jesus unless they knew something about Him beforehand. Any business man in any period in the history of the world is hardheaded enough not to just give

up his business and follow thoughtlessly someone else.

So we need to ask ourselves *what attracted them to Jesus*. The answer is not so simple as it might seem. There were thousands of business men in Palestine, and not all of them left their businesses in order to follow Jesus. It could not be the dynamic quality in Jesus Himself that caused these five men to give up everything to become His disciples. It's doubtful that it was poor business that made them follow Him. Apparently, the fishermen did make an adequate living. Certainly Matthew could, for he could exact as much tax as he could get from the people and had to return only half of the amount to the Roman officials. Neither does it seem likely that it was because these people were dissatisfied with what they were doing and wanted to get away from it. How then can we answer the question as to why they followed Jesus?

Mark tells us in his Gospel that "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the Gospel of God and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe.'" The real reason that these people followed Jesus is the fact that the Holy Spirit called them through the Gospel which Jesus preached. This made them feel that nothing could be so important as obedience to the command of Jesus. Thus when Jesus said, "Follow me," they were willing to leave all and follow Him, even though they did not at that time realize what this following might mean.

A Special Task To Do

Jesus, of course, asked them to be His followers and leave their businesses because He had a special task for them to do. Jesus knew the importance of the work they were doing, but He felt that they had the qualifications necessary for accomplishing a purpose which He thought to be even greater.

There were two things to which He called them—to *discipleship* and to *apostleship*. A disciple is a pupil or follower. These men followed Jesus during His public ministry, and He taught

them concerning the things of the kingdom of God. There are many examples in the New Testament of His teaching (for instance, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6, and 7). On many occasions, the disciples asked questions concerning important aspects of the teaching of Jesus.

After many months as pupils of Jesus, Jesus sent these men out to teach others. This is the meaning of the word apostle—one who is sent. Of course, it was not until after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus that these men really did go out and preach the Gospel. Then with the power of the Holy Spirit they did go to all nations to teach and baptize.

It is very difficult to discover facts concerning what happened to these men. We do know that James stayed in Jerusalem and became the leader of the Christian Church there. Finally in 44 A.D. he suffered martyrdom for his Christian faith.

And we know that Peter was at the very beginning of the Christian Church, its greatest leader. Tradition tells us that Peter went to Rome and was responsible for the founding of a Christian Church there. Certainly Peter did travel rather widely in the Mediterranean world, preaching the Gospel and helping establish congregations.

John became the leader of a large number of congregations centered around the very important city of Ephesus which was the largest and most influential city in Asia Minor, modern Turkey. There are two separate traditions about John. One says that he is the only one of the apostles to die a natural death and live to a very old age. The other tradition says that John was martyred in Ephesus in the year 68 A.D. Whichever tradition is correct, the fact remains that John did go as an apostle to the city of Ephesus.

Andrew went to Greece as an apostle.

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ere, according to tradition, he was
fied at Patrae. Matthew, according to
dition, was the apostle to Egypt. He,
e the others, had gone to preach the
ospel in a foreign land. Probably he
died a martyr.

Not all of the persons whom Jesus
led became disciples and apostles.
any became disciples and followed
m, listening to His preaching and
ching, and learning about the kingdom
God. Only a few were selected to be
ostles and sent to perform the tasks
preaching the Gospel, healing the sick,
establishing the churches.

There are not many stories in the New
Testament about those who refused to be
followers of Jesus, but there is one very
important case. Read Matthew 19:16-30.
The rich young ruler could not obey
Jesus' command. The requirement which
Jesus asked him to fulfill was too severe
a test for his faith. When Jesus told him
that he should sell all that he had and
give to the poor before following Him,
the man refused sorrowfully. Apparently
this man did not permit the Spirit of
God to control his life.

A Task Today

It is one thing to read and understand
what the Bible tells us about people in
the business world of Jesus' day who
became His followers. It is quite another
thing to understand what this might mean
for people in business in our own day.
Perhaps the following questions and ex-
amples could serve as the subject matter
for a discussion.

1. A man of forty-four had been success-
ful as the managing editor of a newspaper in
a small midwestern city. He was interested in
the Church and believed in God. His pastor
finally persuaded him to give up his work and
go to the seminary and become a pastor. Is
this what Jesus means when He says, "Follow
Me"? Would it be any more difficult for this
man to be a follower of Jesus as a newspaper
editor? If you think so, what are your rea-
sons?

2. Does a person who wants to be an
apostle today (isn't this after all what pastors
and missionaries really are?) need to have
special qualifications, or can just anyone serve
God?

3. Which is better, to be a loyal and under-
standing follower (church member and work-
er) or to be an ineffective, bungling pastor or
missionary?

4. Did Jesus really intend that everyone
should leave the business world and become
followers of His?

PROJECTS

1. In order to make your league meeting
interesting and informative, you might ask a
number of business and professional men from
your congregation to come and speak to your
League on some such subject as this—"How
Can I Be a Christian In My Profession?" If you
do this, be sure that you ask people who are
convinced Christians and reputable business
men. Try to get a wide variety, from doctors
and lawyers to small shopkeepers and laborers
in factories.

2. Perhaps one or two persons responsible
for the topic could go and interview some busi-
ness and professional people from other
churches as well as your own to get their opin-
ions concerning the relationship between their
work and their Christian faith.

WORSHIP

Hymn: "In Glad Obedience to Thy Call" 226

CYH

Scripture: Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-17; Psalm 92

Prayer: No. 86, page 381 *CYH*

Hymn: "Living for Jesus" 238 *CYH*

II

IN THE HOME AND COMMUNITY

(Luke 10:38-42; 19: 1-10)

How often does everybody at your
house eat a meal together? It seems that
people are so busy these days that, more
often than not, somebody is absent at
meal time. Everyone seems to feel that
he has a great deal to do, many places
to go, and lots of people to see. Many
teenagers spend more time talking on the
telephone than they do studying their
lessons.

Rarely do families sit down to talk about common problems. Family worship is almost uncommon. Most people seem to send their children to church rather than go with them.

In Jesus' day, only about one-fifth of the people in Palestine—and there were only about 250,000 in the whole country—lived in towns and cities. Transportation was by mule or on foot. People of the lower classes like Jesus traveled on foot from place to place. Newspapers, radio, television, and movies were unheard of. Homes were much less comfortable than are ours today. Families lived in one or two rooms. There was nothing like overstuffed furniture. Modern conveniences hadn't been invented.

Can you imagine what it must have been like to cook a meal on an open fire, wash clothes in a stream, weave and make your own clothing, buy your food in a public market place? Such was the way in which Jesus and His friends lived.

This all goes to show that it is not material things that make a home. The really important element in any home or community is the **people**. In our modern world we have forgotten this very important fact. We spend much more time trying to accumulate conveniences than we do in trying to live together meaningfully.

Jesus Visited Their Homes

According to the New Testament, Jesus often visited in the homes of other people. Some of these were close friends such as Mary, Martha, and Lazarus who lived in Bethany near Jerusalem. Jesus often went into the homes of other people upon their invitation as He did when He went to dinner at the house of Zacchaeus in Jericho.

Whenever anyone comes to visit us in our homes it does make some difference. Mother always fusses a little bit more over the dinner, and insists that we do not leave things lying around the living room. Usually we are instructed solemnly to be in our best behavior, and not to say something that will embarrass either family or company. Naturally,

many of us as a result resent having company.

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were very different from us. Martha especially was concerned about seeing to it that dinner was properly prepared. Jesus had to rebuke her when she complained that Mary didn't concern herself with the things of the household. He said, "Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

Of course, the really important difference that Jesus made in the home of His friends in Bethany was most evident when Lazarus died. Jesus wasn't there at the time and Martha and Mary said that if He had been, Lazarus would not have died. It was then, as you know, that Jesus comforted them with the assurance that He was the resurrection and the life and demonstrated this before their very eyes when He raised Lazarus from the dead.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector in Jericho. He was authorized by the Roman government to exact a tax on goods carried along the road to Jerusalem. In this, he made his living. This kind of person—called a Publican in the New Testament—was intensely disliked by the Jewish people. The Jews resented being under the domination of a foreign power and did not want to pay tax.

When Jesus came through Jericho, Zacchaeus wanted to see this famous person. And so he climbed into a tree for a better view. When Jesus asked to stop at his house, Zacchaeus "received Him joyfully." This visit of Jesus ought not to be thought of as a spur of the moment visit, for Jesus probably had seen Zacchaeus many times as he traveled through Jericho toward Jerusalem. He knew there was a person who was concerned about God and his relationship with Him.

The visit of Jesus in the home of Zacchaeus caused a great change to take place there. Zacchaeus and his whole household were persuaded that Jesus was the long sought Messiah.

There is nothing in the New Testame

It tells us exactly what differences these events made in either of the homes in the relationship of these people to their community. We do know that the people did not respond favorably to Jesus when he went into the home of Zacchaeus.

The Christian's Home and Community

There is a certain amount of discrimination against Christian homes in our world. There are a lot of people who seem to be ashamed of the fact that they belong to a church and believe in God. We should ask ourselves what difference it makes to believe in Jesus. Many people do not seem to let their Christianity affect their business at all. More often than not, church-going people have the same problems in their family lives as those who claim no church membership. In a Christian home there ought to be several things which are quite different from they would be in a non-Christian home. (1) Christian people ought to be more considerate of one another. (2) Willingness to help out in a difficult situation should be taken for granted. (3) Feelings of others should be considered all times. Sacrifices should be made willingly in order that other members of the family might have things or enjoyments. (4) In a Christian home, worshipping together ought to be a matter of course and not a chore or a drudgery. (5) Doing things as a family should be the rule rather than the exception.

Perhaps it is in the little things that Christianity makes the greatest difference. Everyone is willing to go a little bit out of his way in order to do something nice for someone else. Yet how often we forget, how much we complain, and how little we really do put ourselves out.

A Christian should respond differently than the non-Christian to his community. He ought to be concerned about all sorts of things that happen in his town—streets, buildings, schools, public officials. The Christian knows that something should be done about injustices in his community, nation, and world.

The more controversial the question, the more difficult it is to know exactly what ought to be done. Christianity does not give pat solutions to the social, economic, and political problems which confront mankind. The Christian, however, should have a different perspective about these problems. He should realize that God is the ruler of the world. He should realize that God is forgiving and that He has promised for mankind a glorious future.

Everything the Christian person does should be done in love. No person and no group should be the victims of arbitrary treatment. People are tempted to put their own interests first, to set themselves up against their neighbors. This is to break the first commandment. Every Christian must work out for himself solutions to the problems that confront our community, whether it be the local community or the world community.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is there really any difference in a person's actions if he is a Christian?
2. How should a Christian teenager act in his home?
3. What is a Christian person's responsibility to his community?
4. What can teenagers do as Christians about the situation in your school?

PROJECTS

1. Perhaps your league could have a community service day. On such a day, leaguers would offer their services for odd jobs, such as shoveling snow, raking leaves, cutting grass, washing cars, etc.
2. Has a religious survey been made in your community recently? Perhaps your pastor would like to have your help in visiting the homes in your community.
3. There are all sorts of times that a Luther League could render a public service—by distributing informative leaflets, by helping to park cars, or by ushering for a community meeting.

WORSHIP

Hymn: "I Would Be True" 284 CYH

Scripture: Psalm 100; Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-45; 12:1-8; Luke 9:1-10

Prayers: No. 67, 77 CYH

Hymn: "We Give Thee But Thine Own" 290 CYH

How to bless this house

Purpose of the Topic: To learn to have a better appreciation of our home and of the other members of our family in order to find out what part Christ plays in our home and family relationship.

Perhaps you've seen a motto hanging on the wall of someone's home (or you may have one yourself)—a brief statement which says, "Christ is the Head of this House." We who are Christians like to feel that Christ is ever-present in our homes. Do we make a place for Him?

A story is told of a man who went into a real estate office one day and said to the agent, "I'd like to buy a home." The real estate agent said, "I can sell you a house, but it's up to you to make it a home."

A home can be constructed of anything from a tent made of animal skins to a mud hut with a thatched roof, to a strongly-built house of wood, brick, or stone. There is an expression—home is where the heart is. Perhaps that's what makes a real home—the heart.

Jesus said, "In my Father's House are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you." There may be many people today who live in homes in which they would not like to live throughout eternity.

What kind of a house do you live in? Here are word pictures of several types of homes.

I

Barbara and Jack Walters come bursting into the house every afternoon after school. Books are dropped one place, jackets and sweaters another. In vain the mother calls for Jack to go to the store for her. She could use Barbara's help too in setting the table and preparing dinner, but after the storm of their entrance subsides, they're "gone with the wind" again.

Of course, being teenagers, Barbara and Jack are usually hungry. When mealtime comes around, they're always on hand to take their places at the table, rapidly eating the food their mother has prepared for them. In between, mother has patiently picked up jackets and books in an effort to keep her home looking a bit on the orderly side.

No one wants to deprive young people of their hours of recreation, but a little help around the house often goes a long way.

II

In a house down the street, we find a different type of family. As the Browns gather around the table, father conducts a service of worship—brief, but impressive. It is a reminder that there is much to be thankful for—the food they are

out to eat, their home, their happy family life, their Heavenly Father watching over them.

This is one type of family worship which can be found in many homes. In these busy days of modern living, sometimes it seems that there are few opportunities for families to spend time together. Mealtime is one part of the day when children are not rushing one way and mother or father are not dashing another.

Even that short period of worship around the table brings all members of the family close to God, and they feel that God and Christ are a part of their home.

III

A peek into a house in still another part of the city might reveal a mother setting a meal on the table for her little brood. The meal consists of home-made soup and a few pieces of bread. The children gathered around the table are poorly clothed.

Where is the father? Mrs. Mott doesn't know but surmises that her wayward husband is at the corner tap room "living it up with the boys." This is one of the types of homes we of course do not like to see.

It takes all kinds of people to make a world, we are told, but this kind of father thinks little of his home and of his family, and still less of God.

IV

Up on the hill, at the edge of town, stands a large, forbidding-looking house. Here, as in many a smaller house, lives a family consisting of mother, father, and one child. However, here a number of servants are necessary to keep such a large establishment going.

Mr. and Mrs. Crossley, busy with their own activities, have little time for 9-year-old Donald. There is no family life here, no warm companionship. Chores are delegated to servants to be done.

The child is left most of the time to his own devices. No one bothers to see that he goes to church school or to a worship service on Sunday. He is not

acquainted with God who created the world in which he lives.

He is a nervous child, unhappy, dissatisfied with life. Of course, Donald's room is loaded with books and toys. *These are a poor substitute for love and companionship.*

V

Marilyn lives in the kind of house which is also typical of many—a home which three generations share. The fourth commandment may come to your mind as you think of this type of home. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God hath given thee." This means that we are to have respect, not only for our mothers and fathers, but also for grandparents.

Young people's ideas very often do not agree with those of an older generation. Marilyn loves her grandmother very much but sometimes gives snappy answers to her requests to help with little tasks at home.

Love is a relationship of give and take.

VI

"Dad, I need some money. There's a keen-looking jacket down in the Sport Shop I want to get. Several of the fellows in school have them."

Mr. Bradford looked at his son thoughtfully. He heard his son's request for money but didn't answer right away. He was thinking of the repair bills he had just paid on the car, an absolute necessity, since he had to use the car for his work. He was thinking of the shoes a younger child in the family had to have. There were also other household expenses to be met.

He began to wonder if his son needed a better understanding of family finances, an idea of how a budget works and of its limitations. He liked to see his son go along with the crowd, but his answer to young Bill was a disappointing "no."

**Mrs. Charles E. Geiger, Philadelphia,
is a housewife and mother.**

At the same time, he suggested that a family conference on money matters might make for a better understanding among all the members of the family. "Sometimes," thought Mr. Bradford, "it seems that teenagers think money grows on trees."

Too often, when young people want something very special, they fail to realize into how many parts Dad's weekly pay check must be divided.

VII

As you have been listening to the descriptions of several types of homes, probably you've been thinking of your own family. One of these pictures may or may not fit your own home. We hear and sing "Bless This House." Is your house a Christ-centered one where He would feel welcome?

The ideal home is one in which a worship center is set up. Many pastors suggest this idea to their members from time to time. Being a church member is, of course, not a one-day-a-week proposition. We must not be Sunday Christians. We must practice in our daily lives the things we learn in church school and at worship services.

Family worship can take several forms. It may be songs or hymns sung by the family gathered around the piano; it may be a prayer period in which brief prayers are offered by each one; the Bible, source of God's Holy Word, may be read by the head of the family. Another type of worship is the family council, in which problems are discussed and solved. And of course worship at meal times is a type which is preferred by many families. This may include prayer and a reading from the Bible.

Questions for Discussion

How can we show our love for our parents? What can we do to make our homes happier and more Christ-centered? How can prayer help us to have a *Blessed House*? How can we help to promote happier homes among our friends and neighbors. If there are families in our community like the Motts, for example, what can we, as young people, do to help them? If there is family worship in your

home, tell your group. They will want to know about it.

Applying the topic to everyday life:

1. If not already established, introduce family worship, perhaps set up a family altar in your own home.
2. Resolve to help with errands, chores at home, etc., as much as possible.
3. Make it a point to pay attention and have respect for, the opinions of parents and elders.
4. Look around in your community for unchurched families who might be brought to church and Sunday School.

Suggested materials for family worship: Bible; "Good News" (reprints of various books of the Bible, illustrated. Obtainable from American Bible Society for a few cents each.) "Light for Today"; "The Upper Room"; other daily devotional booklets.

Additional Bible Readings: Deuteronomy 6:1-7, Psalm 145, Proverbs 13, and Matthew 7:24-27.

Topic Presentation:

Various leaguers may read the numbered sections. After each section you may wish to have a discussion, or you may desire to save all the questions and ideas until all of the homes are presented.

Some of the circumstances present situations that are caused by teen-agers, others by parents. Approach each problem with a "What would I as a teen-ager do in this case?" attitude. Decide upon various ways that you can make your home more God-centered.

Worship

Prelude: "Bless This House" by Brahe, sung or played.

Call to Worship: "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

Hymn: "Love Divine, all Love Excelling"

Scripture: Proverbs 17

Offering: Soft Music

Offertory Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, as we offer to Thee our humble gifts, may we be aware of Thy great love for us. We are thankful for our homes and families. Help us to carry Thy spirit of Thy love into our everyday lives that our homes, as well as Thy House, may truly be blessed and that we may feel the presence of the Christ within our family circle. Amen.

Hymn: "What a Friend we have in Jesus"

Topic:

Discussion: (See questions for discussion following Topic)

Hymn: "O Jesus Thou Art Standing"

Closing: Lord's Prayer

We Can Agree . . .

Here is a set of guiding principles for family reference. The purpose—to achieve cooperation among parents and students for a safe and acceptable program of social activities for young people. It is based on parent and student surveys.

As young people mature, they desire more freedom. They usually welcome selection, but they resent arbitrary orders. Because of group pressures, young people are often placed in situations which they are unable to handle with poise and good judgment. They want and need the understanding support of their parents.

Parents are eager to have young people enrich their lives through wholesome social activities. However, parents need fortification to combat the pressure, exerted by the attitude of their young people, that *everybody does it*.

The in-between age (grades seven through nine) is largely an experimental period in the social development of young people. With the cooperation of all parents, this period can be a wholesome and happy one, and can aid in the development of social maturity. By setting up desirable and acceptable standards of behavior in the in-between ages, parents and young people can help to avoid later problems.

general

Social activities should be limited to weekends and holidays.

Parents should know where, and with whom, their sons and daughters are spending their time while away from home.

Parents should check on the prompt acceptance or regret of invitations.

Playing social obligations is important in the social development of young people.

All laid plans for a party are disregarded by a rude guest. A courteous youth will follow the plans of the host.

family cooperation

Sincerity and open-mindedness are important in the discussion of friends and activities. There may be good reasons for modifying or reversing an opinion.

An allowance should be planned together, based on a discussion of financial needs and management of money.

Family plans should be organized so that:—

(1) necessary transportation of young people can be provided, and (2) individual members can be reached in case of emergency or change of plans.

school dances

Transportation should be provided by parents. This can be a shared responsibility.

Appropriate dress is a mark of good taste. Dances should include dances that provide for exchange of partners.

Activities after dances seem neither necessary nor wise in this age group.

Reprinted from "We Can Agree," prepared by Parents Council of Secondary Schools, Jenkintown, Pa., with permission.

general dating

The home should not be forgotten as a possible place for dating. Public entertaining is a strain on a boy's allowance.

Group, or double dating, rather than single dating, is to be encouraged. Parents can assist in making this attractive to young people by helping to arrange for trips to skating rinks, or similar group activities.

"Going steady" at this age should be discouraged. Young people profit by a variety of contacts.

A girl and her parents should agree on a definite time for expected arrival at home. A boy should be given an opportunity to meet the parents of his "date," and to discuss time for expected arrival at home.

home entertaining

The home should be the center of young people's social activity.

Young people should be encouraged to bring friends into the home, and parents should welcome the opportunity to meet their sons or daughters' companions and friends.

It is important that invitations be clear as to type of function (for appropriate dress), the time of beginning and ending of a party. It is important that parents be at home and on call at all times when young people entertain.

Parents and young people together should plan entertainment in advance. Boredom and confusion lead to undesirable results.

The number of guests should be limited to a group which can be accommodated easily in the home.

Party crashing is an inexcusable custom. Crashers should not be admitted. Written invitations and a guest list will help solve the problem.

"Lights out" has no place in a well-ordered party!

An ill-behaved guest should not be permitted to spoil a party. Insist upon proper behavior. Speak to an unruly guest in private. Establish definite hours in keeping with the age group. See to it that the party ends at the time stated in the invitation.

Parents should cooperate by calling for the children at the designated time, neither early nor late.

hours

It is generally considered advisable for parents to transport boys and girls of this age group. Late meandering on the streets, or in public places is unsafe for young people. If boys and girls of ninth grade walk home from an early function, a definite time should be set for arrival at home.

The following are suggested hours for the termination of functions:

	GRADES		
	7th	8th	9th
Formals		11:30	12:00*
Informals	10:00	10:30	11:00
Home Parties	10:00	11:00	11:00
General Dating		10:30	11:00

Girls! Now you can be shorter than he—go barefoot.

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